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CALMUC TARTARY;

OR A

JOURNEY FROM SAREPTA

TO SEVERAL

CALMUC HORDES

OF

THE ASTRACAN GOVERNMENT;

FROM MAY 20 TO AUGUST 21, 1825.

UNDERTAKEN, ON BEHALF OF

THE RUSSIAN BIBLE SOCIETY,

BY HENRY AUGUSTUS ZWICK,

AND JOHN GOLFRIED SCHILL,

AND DESCRIBED BY THE FORMER.

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INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE MOGULS, AND THEIR FIRST ACQUAINTANCE WITH CHRISTIANITY.

THE inhabitants of the vast plains, or steppes, which extend northward from the Black Sea and Mount Caucasus, on both sides of the Volga, are known, under the name of Calmucs, as western neighbours of the Kirguses, and eastern of the Don Cossacks. They belong to the great stock of the Moguls, who inhabit the highlands of middle Asia, between the 40th and 50th degrees of latitude, and between the Chinese and Russian dominions. The whole population of this great territory may be referred to four principal tribes: the Tunguses, the Tartars, the Thibetians, and

the Moguls. Of these last, the Calmucs form the portion which approaches the most nearly to Europe; and hordes of these, and similar tribes, appeared with the Russian armies, in the revolutionary campaigns of 1813 and 1814. The Moguls have more than once entered Europe as warriors. First the Huns, who in the 4th century swarmed from the borders of China, driving before them the Goths and other Teutonic nations, to the milder regions of Western Europe, and causing that great migration which, in the 5th century, changed the whole face of Europe. Hardly had the Goths founded new states in the Western Roman Empire, when the Huns, under Attila, followed in destructive bands, till they reached, at Chalons in France, their destined position. In the year 453 Attila died, and the vast kingdom of the Huns, which had stretched from China to France, was quickly dissolved.

In the ensuing ages the Tartarian race had the ascendancy. The Turks of Caucasus, who established themselves firmly in Western Asia, belonged to this tribe. Their conquest of Palestine, occasioned, in the year 1096, a crusade for the recovery of the Holy Land; and the discovery of

a Tartarian kingdom in Middle Asia, in which Christianity was not unknown, was the consequence of this event. The Nestorians, or Chaldeans, a sect of Eastern Christians, who in the year 435 established themselves under a Patriarch at Seleucia, (in the Persian empire) had extended, by means of missionaries, ever since the year 500, to the Black Sea, and even to China; more especially in a Tartarian kingdom of Inner Asia, whose capital, at the time of the first crusade, is said to have been Karakorum on the Chinese boundary. This Tartarian sovereignty in inner Asia fell about the year 1200.

The Moguls now rose again, under the Prince of the Golden Horde, Temudschin or Gengis-Khan. He made, till the year 1227, extensive conquests in Asia, which his sons pursued into Russia and Poland. An end was put to their incursions into Europe, on the 9th of April, 1241, by the battle of Liegnitz. A monastery was afterwards built on the spot; but in Asia, their dominion remained undisturbed, under the grandsons of Gengis-Khan Kajuk, who reigned from 1245 to 1248, and Manku 1251–59. At the death of the latter, the kingdom of the

Great Mogul was divided between his two brothers. Hulaku governed Persia, and Koblai ruled from 1259 to 1294, as Lord of the Kaptschek, or Mogul Empire, extending from Tonkin and Cochin-China, on the eastern coast, over China and Mongolia to Siberia, and from thence to Persia. Different Mogul tribes, with their respective princes, were attached as vassals to the Great Mogul; Sarta, on the Volga, (for instance) and others. The capital was Pekin, in China. This empire flourished through the whole of the thirteenth, and part of the fourteenth century. This was the golden age of the Moguls, in every respect; for, under Koblai-Khan, the nation imbibed, from its dependants and neighbours, its first tinge of civilization by literature and religion. This was derived especially from Thibet.

In that lofty tract of Asia, situated between Mongolia and the East Indies, there was an organized Mogul kingdom, 300 years before Christ. After nearly 700 years, it imbibed from India the religion of Buddh, which was there oppressed by the Bramins, but from this time began to spread over a great part of Asia, and became the religion of all the Mogul race. It was brought (together

with the Thibet alphabet) to the Moguls of Gengis-Khan's tribe, soon after his time, by Pandida Lama.

These uncivilized heathens became acquainted, about the same period, with two other religions—the Mahometan in Persia, and the Christian; the latter from two quarters, and of two different kinds—Nestorian, from the conquered Tartars and other Asiatics, and Roman Catholic, from European missionaries. These attempts at the diffusion of Christianity amongst the Moguls, in the fifteenth century, deserve a more detailed account.

The first intelligence of the Tartarian Princes' at Karakorum, was brought to Alexander the Third, by one "Master Philip," a Roman physician, who professed to have travelled in Tartary, and added many marvels of the might and dominion of Priest John, the head of the church at that place. At a time when the attention of Europe was directed to distant lands, and the spread of the Gospel, no more was required to stimulate the zeal of Alexander, ever inclined, by whatever means, to extend the dominion of St. Peter's chair. He dispatched, in the year 1177,

an epistle to Priest John in the East, in which he set forth the supremacy of the Catholic Church and Apostolic chair. What effect the letter produced is unknown, but the Oriental nations continued for some time an object of attention.

In 1245, when the Oklai Moguls threatened Europe with another deluge of Huns, Pope Innocent made an attempt to organize volunteers from these wild hordes, as the Teutonic and Norman tribes throughout Christendom had been formerly enrolled. For this purpose, he issued two briefs resembling that of his predecessor, the one to the great Khan Kajuk himself, and the other to his generals in Persia. Messengers were selected from the newly established orders of Mendicant Monks; four Dominicans went into Persia, and three Franciscans to Mongolia. The latter arrived at the camp, in 1246, immediately after the accession of Kajuk; they delivered the brief, and obtained a reply, in which the submission of the Pope, and the other Christian Princes, was required, and in case of refusal, they were threatened with new swarms of invaders. The account of this journey, by John di Plano Carpini, is still to be met with. The chivalrous and pious

Louis the Eleventh, or St. Louis, of France, in 1254, sent another embassy to Manku-Kkan, and to his vassals Sartak and Katu-Khan, reigning in Russia over the Don and the Volga. The ambassadors were, again, three Franciscans, under the direction of William Rubruguis, whose account of his journey is also extant, and may be found (like the preceding) in the "*Recueil des Voyages en Asie depuis le douzième jusqu'au quinzième siècle.*" At the head-quarters of the Khan, Rubruguis saw Nestorian Priests, Mahometan Imams, Budhian Lamas, all giving their blessing by turns, and all in the undisturbed enjoyment of their respective religions. The Princes were not disposed to become Christians themselves, but Manku permitted his Nestorian subjects to remain so, and similar toleration was shown by Koblai, throughout his long reign. Towards the beginning of it, two Venetian brothers, laymen, of the name of Polo, settled in his territory for the benefit of trade, and remained nineteen years. At their departure, they received from Koblai a commission to the Pope, to send out one hundred wise men, and learned in the doctrines of Christianity, who might convince his Lamas of the superiority

of the Christian religion. Pope Gregory the Tenth (in the year 1272) sent back these two men with two Dominicans. Marco Polo, a youth of eighteen, accompanied them, and from his account it may be seen, that he was well received by Koblai, remained with him seventeen years, and was employed in state affairs, but without effecting Koblai's conversion. His tolerant disposition, however, and that of his son Timur, (who reigned from 1294 to 1307,) were experienced by other missionaries of the Franciscan order, in new missions and attempts at conversion. One of these was John di Monte Corvino, who, after ten years' labour amongst the Moguls, returned to Europe, and was sent out again by Nicholas the Fourth, together with a German brother of his order, named Arnold. In two letters to Clement the Fifth, dated from Pekin, in the years 1305 and 1306, he writes of 6000 inhabitants of the city, and 150 lads redeemed by himself from slavery, whom he has instructed and baptized, and who meet for worship in two churches. He had also translated the New Testament, and the Psalms, and had them fairly transcribed. He could have done yet more, if it had not been

for the secret machinations of Nestorian Christians, &c. As a reward for his zeal, the Pope appointed him, in his reply, archbishop of that province. He died in the year 1330. Documents of this nature cease from that time, and, in all probability, the prosecution of missionary labours from Europe ceased very soon after. Since the termination of the Crusade, the nations and princes of Europe had nearly lost sight of these distant lands, and the Papal Court at Avignon (from 1309 to 1378,) was too much engrossed with gain and luxury, and the rest of the cares of this world, to attend to the spread of the Gospel. When there was no longer any effort on the part of Europe, the Budhian religion, from Thibet, gained the ascendancy amongst the Moguls in their native seat, and the Mahometan amongst the Persian Moguls, and Nestorian Christianity gradually disappeared from Upper Asia. The popular superstition still shows many signs of a Christianity which had been merged in the religion of Buddh; but the still received tradition of the incarnation of Buddh, (or the divine essence,) in the person of the Lama of Thibet, and the worship of him in lieu of the Deity, prove

how much Indian superstition preponderates over Christianity amongst the Moguls. Pure religious truth was less their object than plunder; and the attention bestowed upon Christian preaching, was, perhaps, only the dictate of superstition, attempting to conciliate the Gods of conquered nations, or of those to be conquered hereafter.

At the close of the fourteenth century, the Moguls appeared once more as invaders. The kingdom of Kaptsahak, (or the Golden Horde,) had been weakened by partition in the year 1340, and the conquered nations revolted, the Chinese especially, who, after driving out the Moguls, in the year 1368, enjoyed their own rulers. Two years after this time, the Mogul Timur-Khan, or Tamerlane, began his conquests, which reached from the high plains of Inner Asia, quite into India. In 1404, he died, and his kingdom lasted only in India. During his life, the Christians in Upper Asia enjoyed less freedom; he was himself a Mahometan, zealous for his religion, and intolerant towards the Nestorians. China, after she recovered her freedom, discarded the religion of Buddh, (or Fo, as it is there called,) and returned to her former Polytheism, and to the

lessons of Confucius, (who flourished 400 years before Christ.) The hostilitity to Christianity, in the meanwhile, did not abate, and here also it disappeared, as amongst the Moguls.

In later times, (after the beginning of the sixteenth century, that is to say,) these tribes were gradually subjected to the two great neighbouring empires, the Chinese and the Russian. The latter, which had been a powerful kingdom since the year 843, and embraced the Greek form of Christianity under the Czar Basilius, in 1016, had been compelled to submit to the Mogul conquerors, and was first delivered from them by Iwan Basilowitz, in 1462. Basilowitz the Second, who reigned from 1549 to 1584, possessed himself of Kasan, Astracan, and vast tracts of land in Siberia, and thus became lord of many Mogul tribes, including the Calmucs who range over the Astracan steppes. The situation of Russia, under Peter the Great, which concerned the Greek Church, inasmuch as the Czar, in 1721, transferred the ecclesiastical authority from the Patriarch at Moscow, to the Synod at Petersburgh, had a bearing also upon the condition of these and other heathenish tribes; for the holy Synod

decreed, in the year 1724, "that provision should be made for the conversion of the same, and for their reception into the Greek orthodox national church." It failed however, at that time, of being carried into effect.

In all Europe, there were then only a few individuals, or small societies, whose attention was directed to the preaching of the Gospel to the heathen. The spirit of the age was disinclined, or even hostile to Christianity; it was partly a worldly spirit, absorbed in the cares of commerce and political intrigue, and partly a spirit of scepticism and false philosophy. It was not till the general confusion of the kingdoms of Europe after the year 1789, (a confusion in great measure to be ascribed to that destructive spirit,) that the progress of the better spirit of Christianity became more and more manifest; and societies for the diffusion of Christianity, and the dissemination of the Scriptures, arose here and there, at the commencement of the new century; particularly after the general peace of Europe, in 1814. Even in Russia, the newly awakened zeal for the Christian cause displayed its power—witness the Russian Bible Society, which held its

first meeting on the 20th of September 1814, and in the ensuing years showed its activity, by translations of the Holy Scriptures into many of the languages of that vast Empire. All Europe received, in 1817, the declaration of the Emperor Alexander: "I consider the progress of Bible Societies in Russia and the whole world, and their success amongst Christians, Heathens and Mahometans, as a signal instance of the grace of God." And, "that the saving light of Revelation might extend to all the nations of the Empire," the Emperor then became a member of the Society, and issued an ukase, in which the diffusion of the Scriptures amongst the people, was enforced upon the clergy as an imperative duty. To the general activity of this spirit, throughout the Russian dominions, may be ascribed the efforts of the United Brethren at Sarepta,* (in their humble sphere) and of these we must now give some account.

* Moravians.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE EFFORTS OF THE UNITED BRETHREN, AT SAREPTA, FOR THE CONVERSION OF THE CALMUCS.

AFTER the peace of Hubertsburg, in 1763, when Catherine the Second was desirous of peopling the uninhabited tracts of the Volga with German colonists, an invitation was sent to the Directors of the United Brethren; and two delegates, Loretz and Lairitz, having negociated preliminaries at Petersburgh, in the year 1764, an establishment was the following year begun, by five German Brethren, at the confluence of the Sarpa and Volga, and (with a reference to the First Book of Kings, chapter seventeenth,) they named it Sarepta.* The situation of this place, on the confines of

* Alluding to the Widow's cruse and handful of meal in the city of Zarephath. *Translator.*

Asia, on the great commercial road from Moscow through Astracan to the interior of that quarter of the globe, was a memento for the revival of former missionary schemes (regarding the Calmucs and other still more Easterly nations,) which soon after the first re-appearance of the missionary spirit, in the year 1731, had been formed at Herrnhut, without ever having been carried into effect. Half a century, however, rolled over Sarepta, before the execution of this project. In the year 1771 a large division of Cossacks, the Great Horde, as they were called, migrated from these parts to the borders of China, and only five smaller tribes continued to range between the Don and the Volga. Sarepta itself was at that time in great danger from other neighbours. First from marauding Kirguses, and afterwards from the rebellion of the Cossacks under Pugatschef, in 1774. By the latter the settlement was plundered, on the 9th of September, and would have been wholly destroyed, but for the appearance of Russian troops, who chased these wild bands and quelled the revolt. With the assistance of the Russian Government, and of the other United Brethren, the inhabitants, at that time 200 in

number, repaired the damage they had sustained —trade and commerce flourished again, grazing and husbandry prospered. Many Calmucs visited Sarepta, and many of the brethren became acquainted with their language, and sought opportunity to bring them to the knowledge of the Scriptures; their endeavours, however, and individual attempts, (by the instruction of their children, for example,) had no effect. The present century, under the reign of the Emperor Alexander, brought many misfortunes upon Sarepta; commercial losses, fires, a bad state of trade, and consequent diminution of external comforts; especially during the French war, and its results. It was at this very time, that fresh missionary zeal was alive at Sarepta. Others had preceded in the good work. In 1802, the Scotch Missionary Society (instituted in the year 1797,) had already founded an establishment amongst the Tartarian tribes at Karass, and, in 1806, they obtained an Imperial decree, enabling them to receive into the Christian Church by baptism, such heathens as were members of their colony. A friendly correspondence had existed for some time between Karass and Sarepta, when applica-

tion was made by respected members of the British Missionary Society to Sarepta, and to the directors of the United Brethren, for a mission to the Calmucs. A few of the Brethren at Sarepta, who were disengaged and willing to labour in this field, were to have opportunity of learning the Calmuc tongue first at Sarepta, then from one of the hordes, and by this means to search out whether any thing could be done for the main object—and how—whether verbally, or by means of the Holy Scriptures. Here, again, a helping hand from without was offered to them by the Russian Bible Society, who were then translating some parts of the New Testament, by their secretary, Isaac Jacob Schmidt at Petersburgh—a man well skilled in the languages and history of the Moguls. These translations were put to the press in 1815; and, in the same year, the plan above-mentioned proceeded so far, that in May, two of the brethren, Schill and Hübner, accompanied by their instructor in the language of the Calmucs, (brother Loos,) set off to the Coschudan horde, which is situated on both shores of the Volga, 140 miles from Sarepta, and thirty-five from Astracan. Prince Thummen received

them as guests, in consequence of a recommendation from Petersburgh, and he procured for them, after the return of Loos, a teacher of the language of the name of Schalz, who had been formerly a chief of his tribe. At the end of the year, however, signs of distrust began already to show themselves amongst the chiefs and priests, when two copies of the Gospel of Matthew were sent to the former, through Prince Galitzin, the minister. A hundred copies from the Russian Bible Society followed soon after, to be distributed by the hands of the Brethren. At first, a great many of these were received, as Thummen at all events did not hinder the business; but after his death, which happened on the 11th of July, 1816, and the arrival of his son and successor, Schwedschab, from Petersburgh, (September 5th,) great difficulties presented themselves; particularly on the following occasion. Towards the end of the year 1817, Nomtu and Badma, two nobles of the Buriat Mogul race, had been called from Lake Baikal to Petersburgh, to assist in translating the Bible into their own dialect and character, which differ somewhat from those of the Calmucs. In the course of their labours, these men became con-

vinced of the truth of the Christian religion, and declared their opinion to their countrymen by writing. A copy of this letter came from Petersburgh to the Coschudan horde. Prince, and Lama, priests, and people, were astounded, but they gainsayed—one man only, belonging to the Torgusian tribe, who with his wife and family was residing amongst the Coschudans—(Sodnom by name)—one who had been before an attentive hearer of the word, was so powerfully affected by the letter to the Buriats, as to experience a lively conviction of the difference between Christianity and his own hereditary religion. The Brethren led him forward in the knowledge of the Scriptures, and began to hope, that from this first grain of corn, a rich harvest would spring. He himself expressed his blessed conviction, in letters to the Buriats at Petersburgh and to the Brethren at Sarepta, and also verbally to his countrymen; but he found their hearts shut. The Prince himself, as little as he honoured the Priests, (for he had reduced their number from 800 to 250,) would not willingly either hear or speak of Christianity.

In the year 1818, Hübner was relieved by

Loos: Loos and Schill visited Sarepta in the Easter of 1819, and returned with a third fellow-worker, and in December of the same year, they were visited by the narrator of this tour. He became acquainted with the chief and others, particularly with Sodnom, and carried home with him to Sarepta a heartfelt love for the good work, and for its first fruits. The progress in 1820 was encouraging; Sodnom's increase in grace, and the knowledge of Christ, was strengthened by a continued correspondence with the Buriats, (especially with Bedma) which was kept up till his death.*

On a visit which he made to his native (the Torgusian) horde, accompanied by Schill, not only his brother Schimba was brought to be like-minded with himself, but also the family of Lurum, and of his brother Oesk. All these settled amongst the Coschudes; and a community of the Lord appeared to be growing amongst the wild inhabitants of the plains on the Volga, to the joy of

* He died on the 29th of October, 1822, having been baptized in the name of John, a few days before at Petersburgh, by one of the clergy of the national church. He died in the 21th year of his age.

the Missionaries, and of all far and near who participated in the work. Not long did it last.

In the year 1821, it became more and more manifest that the opposers of the cause of Christ had succeeded in rendering the chiefs of the horde hostile to it; and in the autumn the converted Calmucs, and the three Brethren, received an order to quit the horde. They departed without molestation, Sodnom and Schimba, Lurum and his brother, with their families and herds, under the guidance of Schill, and arrived, twenty-two in number, on the shore of the Volga opposite Sarepta. The two other brethren followed soon after. This was in October, and the winter was coming on. The island in the Volga, which belonged to Sarepta, was at first assigned to them, where they pitched their tents, and in the midst of which a log house was built for their teachers. In the Easter of the following spring, 1822, their habitation was appointed to them, on the west shore of the Volga, near a mineral spring, a little more than three miles from Sarepta. Here they dwelt this year, and a part of the next, uncertain as to their future fate and external condition, but growing in the inner life, and full of longing to be

received into the union of the church of Christ, by baptism. The first effect produced in 1820, had already excited in the minds of the Society at Sarepta, and of their Directors, a desire to obtain from the Government some specific agreement; and the first steps had been already taken towards this object at Petersburgh. A new occasion was now presented for renewing the negociation, by the expulsion of the believers from their horde, and their subsequent establishment upon land belonging to the colony at Sarepta. It clearly appeared however at this time, (1822) that the Established Church reserved to itself, exclusively, the right of converting Heathens, and allowing them to make an open profession of Christianity, by being baptized, and that the only Christian labour which could be carried on by those of different persuasions, consistently with the law of the land, was confined to the project of distributing the Scriptures, with the co-operation of the Russian Bible Society. No more was to be thought of a mission from the Brethren to the Calmucs, and of forming a Society from these Heathens. The question—what was to become of the exiles who had settled on the territory belong-

ing to Sarepta, (rendered doubly perplexing by these circumstances) was decided in 1823, by the event. On the 12th of October in that year, fifteen Calmucs from the Derbodian tribe, headed by a priest, made a plundering incursion upon their believing countrymen. Lurum escaped with difficulty from their hands. Nothing remained for the oppressed, but to put themselves under Russian protection, at Zaritzyn. Sodnom and his brother were baptized there, into the orthodox Greek Church, (in November) upon application to the Patriarch. So ended the attempts of the Brethren of Sarepta for the conversion of the Calmucs! And this too at a time, when the colony itself had lost two-thirds of its dwellings, by a fire on the 9th of August preceding.

Before this misfortune, and during the residence of the believing Calmucs in their neighbourhood, assistance had kindly been offered to them, for the furtherance of the work amongst the five hordes of wandering Moguls. The Petersburgh Bible Society, at that time zealously active, had sent to the Brethren at Sarepta, in the year 1822, a considerable number of copies of the Calmuc Gospel of Matthew, and other small Christian

tracts, with a commission to get them distributed by Brethren sent out for the purpose. This was the origin of the journey, on behalf of the Petersburgh Bible Society, of which the account is now presented to the reader. Detached portions, contained in the letters of brother Zwick, have already been published in the memoirs of the United Brethren (for 1823, Chapter 6, and for 1824, Chapter 1.) It is here given as a whole, and its connexion with the preceding labours of the Brethren amongst the Calmucs, appears from this sketch.

JOURNEY FROM SAREPTA,

&c.

CHAPTER I.

OBJECT AND PLAN OF THE JOURNEY.

AN application had been made to the Russian Government, in the year 1820, for renewed letters of protection, in behalf of the Brethren who were then with the Coschudan horde; in consequence of which, six sealed letters of protection and recommendation, addressed to so many different heads of hordes, were sent, through his Highness Prince Galitzin, from the minister of Asiatic and foreign affairs, Count Nesselrode, to the society at Sarepta, in 1822. Permission was at the same time granted to the Brethren, to diffuse amongst these tribes such portions of Scripture as had

been translated into the Calmuc language, but with an annexed injunction from Prince Galitzin, that they should confine themselves to the distribution of the Scriptures, and refrain from all comment! A commission was given in consequence, by the conference of elders at Sarepta (sanctioned by the united conference of elders,) in May 1823, to brother Schill and myself, to undertake a journey with the books of Scripture which had been translated into the Calmuc language, to those hordes to whom we had letters. We were to acquire, as far as was practicable, a complete knowledge of the Calmucs in general, (for we had hitherto been acquainted only with the Coschudan horde, which is one of the smallest,) to observe how far there might be any present disposition to inquire into Christianity; and, whether there was any spot where the Calmuc families who had been residing so long on our land at Sarepta, could be settled, and where a missionary station might afterwards be established, if the Government should permit.

We received the commission with joy, in the hope, that the Lord might be pleased, through our humble efforts, to work out salvation for poor

souls now sitting in the dark and deceitful error of Buddhaism, without the knowledge of the true God, and of Christ whom He has sent for the salvation of men.

It was desirable that the journey should take place as soon as possible, both on account of the scarcity of water on these desert plains, late in the season, and of the removal of the hordes farther to the south, where they take up their winter quarters. All preparations were therefore made immediately, and in ten days we were ready to start. We procured a small Russian vehicle, called a kibitka, which served as a travelling carriage for brother Schill, and conveyed our baggage and utensils, together with a part of our store of provisions, which consisted chiefly of biscuit and rice. To transport our copies of Scripture, which were packed in chests, we bought a couple of two-wheeled Tartarian carts, (called arba,) with the requisite horses and tackle, and hired two Tartars as drivers. They both understood Russian, and Andra, the elder of the two, was acquainted with the Calmuc tongue also. He had been baptized into the Greek Church, in his youth; the other was a Mahometan. For my

own part, I travelled on horseback, partly because I preferred it to using a coach on uneven ground, without any regular road across these desert plains, and partly because, in traversing a country where every body rides, it was expedient that one of the party should be on horseback, not only to have a scout always on the alert, but to procure information more easily, when it was wanted, of Calmucs who might reside at a distance.

CHAPTER II.

JOURNEY FROM SAREPTA TO TSCHORN UJAH.

WE set off from Sarepta on the 26th of May, at seven o'clock in the morning, after having the evening before commended ourselves earnestly to the pious remembrance and sincere prayers of the Society. The Brethren of the Conference of Elders, and some other friends, accompanied us to the boundary of the territory of Sarepta, where they took an affectionate leave of us. We were advancing to a doubtful fate, little knowing what misfortunes might befal us on this long, (and on account of the continual skirmishes between the different hordes of Calmucs, I may say) dangerous journey; not knowing either in what light

our errand would be regarded, by tribes whose opposition to the diffusion of the Gospel our Brethren had already experienced. We trusted however in Him whose work we were upon, since we were, in obedience to His command, proclaiming to men His holy and eternal word. Though obliged to confine ourselves to the distribution of the books of Scripture which had been printed, and not at this time permitted to bear testimony with our lips to what Jesus has done for us, we were filled with fresh hope and confiding trust, by this day's text for the Brethren. The words, "they shall all be taught of God," promised us, as applied to our journey, a blessed result; while the watch-word, "I will pour out my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon *those that come after thee*, so that they shall spring up like grass, like the meadows by the water-brooks," reminded us, that the fulfilment might not appear till a far distant day, when the seed now about to be scattered by the promulgation of the Scriptures, should bring forth its fruit.

We took our way first along the shores of the Volga to Tschornoijah, where we were to get the necessary passes for our Tartar drivers. After

leaving that place, we proceeded westward to the Torguts, who are commanded by Prince Erdeni. We stopped at noon, at the Russian village Schvatloyorskai, twelve versts* from Sarepta, in the hut of a peasant, with whom we had some acquaintance. After we had left it, we were exposed to a heavy storm for several hours, with violent rain. Our carriages and baggage were thoroughly soaked, and the roads for the rest of that day, and part of the next, rendered exceedingly slippery, as the ground in this part consists chiefly of clay. Through this heavy rain, I remained perfectly dry, excepting my feet, for my good Tartar felt-cloak resisted all the attacks of the wet. At eight in the evening, after a day's journey of only thirty versts, (20 miles) we arrived at the village of Rai-Gorodok, more commonly called Popowitska, where we took up our abode for the night on the landing-place of a Russian, and enjoyed sweet repose.

The following day, May 27th, we travelled through a country which appeared more fertile than the neighbourhood of Sarepta. Grassy valleys were seen here and there, and occasional

* A verst is about two-thirds of a mile.

tracts of arable land, with the produce of former years still standing in stacks. At eleven o'clock, we dined in the village of Salnekovskoja, where a strong body of Cossacks were quartering. This detachment was on its way to the cordon on this side of the Aktubah, to oppose the Kirguses, and was halting here for a day's rest. In the afternoon we passed a fine valley, covered with the most beautiful grass, which supplies all the neighbouring villages with hay. At eleven at night, we reached the village of Vasovskoja, where we had some difficulty in procuring a lodging, as the inhabitants were all gone to rest. After eating a scanty supper, we hastened to repose, wearied as we were by the journey and the heat of the day.

On the 28th, we were much annoyed by the dust in the course of our journey; it lay on the roads four inches deep, and incessantly covered us with its thick clouds. After eating our dinner at Zaritza, which was founded only a few years ago, but is no longer an insignificant village, we pressed forward, that we might reach Tschornoija that day, if possible. In the afternoon, we had to our right a small ridge of hills, running

parallel to the Volga on our left, and which, in remote antiquity, may possibly have formed the western shore of that river. The view of the Volga, which we enjoyed almost uninterruptedly, was surpassing! Its waters had risen to their greatest elevation, and overflowed the eastern bank to a considerable distance, presenting an expanse of water twenty or thirty miles wide, beyond which the eye could not reach. Long islands, clothed in beautiful verdure, arose here and there, and ships and boats, with and without sails, gilded by the rays of the setting sun, glided amongst them. We arrived at Tschornoija at nine in the evening, and took up our quarters at a butcher's. The whole of the following day was spent in this town, in order to provide what was necessary for our journey across the steppes, which commence at this place.

CHAPTER III.

ENTRANCE UPON THE STEPPES.—DESCRIPTION OF THEM.

THE steppes in the government of Astracan, extending northward from the Caspian Sea, on both sides of the Volga, over which the Calmucs and Tartars wander for pasture, are amongst the most desert parts of the Russian empire. The soil consists almost entirely of yellow clay, without stones, and abundantly impregnated with various salts. This fact, as well as the pits and salt lakes, and the great quantity of unfossilised shells still to be found on the surface of the earth, confirms the opinion of some of the learned, that these steppes were formerly the bottom of a sea, which in some convulsion of nature, has made its way into the Mediterranean, by the Straits of

Marmora. Supposing this to have been the case, the Caspian, the sea of Asoph, the Black Sea, and all the other seas in the neighbourhood, as being the deepest parts of that primitive ocean, remained when the waters had elsewhere run off. Except Mount Bogdo (which is noble) there are no mountains amongst these steppes; they seldom, however, present a complete plain, but are more or less hilly, alternately rising gently, and again falling in valleys, so that the prospect is always confined, and seldom allows a view of many miles in extent. Vegetation is exceedingly scanty, consisting chiefly of low-growing wormwood, interspersed with tufts of grass, which never fully cover the ground, or form a uniform turf; these two principal productions of the steppes growing in solitary bunches, between which the yellow ground is seen on all sides. In the valleys, there are here and there places more fertile, but they are commonly covered with salt herbs fit only for camels. Many parts of the steppes are adorned, in spring, with the brilliant flowers of the iris, the tulip, and other bulbous rooted plants, till the raging heat of the sun, which is intercepted by no hill or tree, together with the scarcity of rain

during this scorching heat, kills them all. In the southerly steppes, the thermometer often remains, for weeks together, at 30 degrees of Reaumur, and not a single refreshing cloud appears in the heavens. Overpowering as the heat is in summer, it is not worse than the petrifying cold in winter, when the thermometer is as many degrees below the freezing point; and this is felt the more, because no mountains intervene to keep off the cold air from the east, which comes from the lofty ice-covered Mongolia, in an irresistible stream. One of the marvels of nature, belonging to these steppes, is the *looming*, which takes place here in hot weather. The rays of the sun reflected from the heated surface of the steppes, and refracted by the slight dew which is drawn from the earth, occasion an optical deception, by which objects, not in sight, are pictured in the air, at the edge of the mist, as if reared on a stream of water. The images sink by degrees, lower and lower as the spectator approaches, till at last the stream vanishes, and the real landscape is seen, at a greater distance and smaller than it appeared on the mist. If the weary traveller have hoped shortly to reach the desired resting-place, he sees

it retreating the faster, the more eagerly he stretches towards it. The animals inhabiting these steppes, between the Taik and the Volga, are wild horses, abundance of antelopes, (antelopa sagax,) foxes, wolves, the dipus jerboa and the mus jaculans. Serpents and lizards are very common. There are no bees, nor any of those insects which are beneficial to man, but many of those which are hurtful. Swarms of those locusts which devastate whole provinces, (for example) and other less formidable varieties of the same family, have their birth here, and often darken the air with their rustling armies, laying waste wherever they settle. Scorpions, I believe, are confined to Mount Bogdo, but millepedes, six or eight inches long, (scolopendra millepes) tarantula, (aranea tarantula) and the still more poisonous scorpion-spider, which the Calmucs call the black widow, (belbussun chàrra) are every where to be met with, and are much dreaded. These steppes are, on the whole, rich in objects which would be welcome to the cabinet of the naturalist; but on account of their difficulty of access, (which even Asiatic hospitality cannot remedy) they are seldom visited by Europeans, except by the few

whose office and duty compel them. In a desert, where for a day's journey together you find neither the habitation of man, nor a pool of water, where the pastoral tribes continually change their position, the traveller is in danger of perishing in the wilderness, if he be not provided with an experienced guide. The Russian cattle-dealers, and pedlars, who are induced, by the love of gain, to overlook danger and toil and wants of various kinds, are the only people who are occasionally tempted to enter these deserts.

The native inhabitants are Moguls, Tartars, Kirguses, and pastoral Cossacks. The wealth of this nation consists in their camels, horses, oxen, sheep, and goats: these supply all their wants, or the means of procuring from merchants what else they require.

The Calmucs, to whom we were directing our steps, are divided into five hordes,—in the Mogul language orda. These are the Derbodian, (the nearest to Sarepta) the Torgudan, the Erkedian, the Baganzokhan, and the Coschudan, each under its own khan or chief. The two first reside usually on the east of the Don and Sarpa; the two next between the Sarpa and Volga; and the

last on the Aktubak, on this side of the Volga. The winter quarters of some extend much farther, for in the winter the Calmucs drive their herds from the steppes, and withdraw to regions better furnished with water. The Derbodians to the Kuma, the Erkedians to the well wooded shores of the Caspian above Kislar—one part of the Torgudans (the Yandykuseches) to the same neighbourhood, while the other division, under the Khans Erdeni and Zerren Ubaschi, remain in the Sarpa marshes. The camps of the two Tartarian Princes, just mentioned, were our first destination, after we had entered the steppes.

CHAPTER IV.

JOURNEY OVER THE STEPPES TO THE TORGUDAN HORDE OF PRINCE (OR KHAN) ERDINI. ARRIVAL THERE.

It was on the 30th of May that we left Tschornoija to proceed across the steppes, in a westerly direction, to the Torgudan horde which was encamped near the Sarpa. For a considerable part of the way we were able to take advantage of the road which leads from Zaritsin to the Russian line of fortification at Caucasus. This road branches off from the Astracan post-road at some distance from Zaritsin: uncertain whether it was the right, we inquired first of some Russian children who were at hand, and afterwards of a Russian whom we observed at a distance, but all in vain, for the children did not know, and the man would not speak; further on, however, we met

with others, who satisfied us that we were right. After travelling about twenty-five versts on this road, we found in a hollow, by a pit of milk-white water, the first Calmuc tent; we encamped near it for our noon-day rest, and prepared our flesh and rice for dinner. It was not till we had slaked our thirst at this muddy pool, that we perceived it was full of (what we afterwards found, with the help of a tea-strainer, to be) amphibious spawn; we did not suffer any inconvenience, however, from having partaken of it. While we were halting came a Calmuc from the Bagan Zocher horde, with a led horse in his hand, in search of some stray camels. He told us that the neighbourhood was very unsafe, in consequence of the quarrels of the Derbodians, and that he had brought two horses, to secure his escape on the fresh one if he should be in danger. The feud to which he alluded, was caused by internal divisions in the tribes to which we were going: we collected from the Calmucs in different parts, the following account of the quarrel. Erdeni, (or Ardani,) the Chief of one division of the Torgudan horde, married Zebeck, the sister of Erdeni prince of the Derbodians. In the fortieth year of her age

he sent her home to her father's tribe, in consequence of her infidelity. The Derbodians demanded restitution of the dower. The Torgudans refused it; and hence arose between the two clans the most violent animosity, the people on each side espousing the cause of their chieftain, and plunder and murder ensuing. Though the Derbodian Erdeni had died the autumn before, the feud was not appeased, but was kept alive by his brother Dschambe. The contest between the two hordes would have been very unequal (as the Derbodians were reckoned at ten or from that to twelve thousand tents or families, and the Torgudans at only 400,) but other hordes joined in the strife, according to their connexion with the different parties concerned. On the side of the Derbodians was the Tandykischan division of the Torgudan horde, 1000 tents strong, commanded by the Princess Bogusch or Nadmid, sister to the Derbodian prince. On the other hand, Zerren Ubaschi, another Torgudan, with his horde of 800 tents, and the Bagan Zochars with 1700 tents, took the part of the Torgudan Erdeni, because the chief of the three nobles, by whom they were governed, was related to the Torgudan

prince. A third detachment of Torgudes, under the command of three brothers, Dschirgal, Otschir and Setter, ranged themselves nominally with Prince Erdeni, and plundered friend and foe in a most unruly manner. It was chiefly by this branch of the Torgudan tribe, that many Russian horsemen and Tartars were pillaged. Of all the hordes on the steppes, but two remained neutral: the Erkedes, estimated at 1000 tents, and the Coschudans, of the same strength; the former on the western, the latter on the eastern shore of the Volga: so that of the 20,000 tents or families of Calmucs, who inhabit the government of Astracan, there were, at the time we were travelling amongst them, only 2000 at peace, and 3000 were in arms against about 15,000. The Torgudes, though in number only a fifth of the Derbodians, had some advantages in the unequal strife, which enabled them to persevere with vigour. Their barren waterless steppes, and constant change of position, prevented them from being easily reached by the Derbodians. The Torgudes are moreover a hardy race, inured to privations, and subsisting in summer by the chase of antelopes, which abound on the steppes. For this reason, they are almost

universally provided with guns, which is not the case with the less active and hardy Derbodians. The Torgudan horses are also decidedly superior to the Derbodian, both in swiftness and capability of sustaining fatigue. They are fed upon wormwood and other dry herbs, while those of the Derbodians are accustomed to richer pasture, and though apparently in better condition, are not so strong.

These feuds had now lasted and gained strength uninterruptedly for three years. Government had not hitherto interfered with any severity, but had taken the tone of conciliation and kindness. As this had proved unavailing, and the Calmucs, after the Russian residents (or Pristaws) were recalled from the hordes which we were to visit, burst forth with redoubled fury, on being relieved from their troublesome inspectors, it seemed probable that some important change was about to take place in the state of the tribes.

As we could not but fear, under such circumstances, that we might fall in with a skirmishing party, we made ready our arms, to be prepared for the event. In the afternoon we saw many

antelopes, some solitary and some in herds. The old ones were exceedingly shy, but the young ones, who occasionally came very near us, were stupidly fearless. One of them, apparently about eight days old, (it was the size of a kid of a fortnight old,) came running directly up to our coach. Our old Tartar, André, shot at it, when it was about fifty paces from us; he missed it however, and did not even disturb its course, and it would have waited for a second shot, if our coach-dog had not run after it and frightened it. The way in which these creatures bound, when they are beginning to run, is exceedingly curious. When our dog, for instance, came within twenty paces of this young one, it sprang up into the air, more than an ell high, then ran quickly for a few steps, sprang up again, and laying its head almost down to the ground, it set off with incredible speed and was soon out of sight. It is said that skilful riders, well mounted, can sometimes tire the young ones, so that they will lie down and let themselves be killed, after they have run a few versts. We often chased these creatures afterwards, with no better success than this time, and not being provided with musquets, we were forced to content

ourselves with admiring their leaps. At sunset, we reached a long valley called Dalata, (the secluded) where we again found some Calmuc tents. As there were few wells in this neighbourhood, and those covered over, and the water bitter, we proceeded without delay, hoping to reach a spot called merchant's hill, which had been described to us as having good water. Unhappily, we missed this hill, and after riding till eleven o'clock at night, and pretty well tiring our horses, we were forced to pitch our tents for the night, in a very desert spot, without having found any water. We tied the fore legs of our horses with chains, and then permitted them to seek what food the desert afforded; in the mean time, we betook ourselves (with a remnant of black bread in our hands, which we had brought from Tschornoija) to our blanket spread under the waggon. We had travelled about thirty-three miles on this, our first day of crossing the steppes.

When we rose, and removed our blanket, at six o' clock the next morning, we found several tarantula, but they had not disturbed our repose. In the course of a few hours, we reached some muddy pits of water, where our thirsty horses

were allowed to drink, and in the next few hours we found more than a hundred pits and wells, from twenty to twenty-five paces in diameter, and twenty or thirty feet deep. These and other wells which may be found on the steppes, are most likely the work of some ancient pastoral nation, the former inhabitants of these regions, for at present the lazy Calmucs, though pressed by necessity, will hardly take the trouble to keep them in order. We found good water in some of these wells; here therefore we prepared our dinner, which consisted of rice and a bustard (otis tarda). For fuel, we made use of the dry dung which we found near the wells; a material which, in this barren place, is the only one to be had for the purpose, and supplies the place of wood very well, as it kindles (like turf) with a slight application of warmth, and gives out a great heat. In an inaccessible hole, in the wall of a well, we saw the nest of a red duck, (anas casarca) and countless swallows (hirundo riparia); round about both far and near, herds of antelopes were grazing. These wells, when they are such as cattle can drink out of, and more especially if they are in grassy valleys, are the rendezvous of all the animals that inhabit the

steppes. After travelling through a very barren tract in the afternoon, without seeing a living creature, except antelopes, and, occasionally, eagles of different species, most commonly the falco bucocephalus, we prepared our beds for the night, at nine o'clock, near a muddy pit of bitter water, which neither we nor our horses could drink. In the night, we heard the cry of wolves in the distance, but were happily spared a visitation.

On the 1st of June, we set off, fasting, at five o'clock, and after a couple of hours we came to a deep well of good water, where we and our horses quenched our thirst, and we filled a small vessel to carry with us. In the steep sides of this well, there were some great steps, on which the Calmucs stand to reach the water for their cattle, from one to another. On the lowest was a flat vessel to drink out of. The Calmucs commonly use, for their cattle, wooden troughs which they buy from the Russians. These wells, of such inestimable value in the barren waste, reminded us here, and often afterwards, of the life of the Patriarchs of the Old Testament: how Rebecca watered the camels of Isaac, and Jacob the

sheep of Rachael. Particular spots were then described by the wells they contained, and these, from their importance, often gave rise to strife: at this day, we found the places on the steppes almost exclusively named from their wells, and there was no lack of dissension and feud in the use of them.

About eight o'clock, we saw at a distance three armed Calmucs to our right, and a gellong (or priest) who rode with them. They were the forerunners of a wandering troop belonging to the horde of Zerren Ubaschi. When we had answered their eager inquiries as to what we had to sell, and presented them with a few leaves of tobacco, we learned the present station of Prince Erdeni, and we left, in consequence, the track we had hitherto pursued, and stretched in another course more to the West. Here we saw at a distance, on a green mound, a few red ducks, (anas casarea), and, on a closer inspection, we found that they were sitting at the entrance of a deserted wolf's den, where they had made their inaccessible nest, as we saw by the footsteps into the cave. At eleven o'clock, we again found a few wells with a little water, and by them some

Calmuc tents. Here we halted to dine, and were hospitably treated by the Calmucs with sour mares' milk (or tschigan,) which we enjoyed the more from having suffered great thirst in the morning. At our departure, we gave them some tobacco, and learned in return, that there was a regular road *not far off;* (the lower of the two roads leading along the mountains from Sarepta, to the line of fortification at Caucasus;) we did not reach it, however, for many hours, though the Calmucs, with one voice, had assured us that it was close to their doors. We experienced here, as we afterwards did on numberless occasions, that the Calmucs never describe distance correctly, and that they always abridge it. Their measures are, a day's march for a tribe, that is ten or twelve miles; a horseman's journey, which is sometimes as much as 100 or 113 miles; and a third measure, which is taken from the distance at which a man's voice can be heard, and which agrees pretty well with a verst, (two-thirds of a mile.) They are never exact, however, in the use of these measures, because, when they are riding, they do not notice a verst more or less. At the point where we joined the road which I mentioned,

we saw far off to the west, an arm of the Sarpa, which refreshed our eyes with its green sedges, after the dreary uniformity of the steppes. Farther still to the west, in deep blue, rose the chain of the Sarpa hills, which extend from Sarpa to Sarepta, and then disappear at the beginning of the Reuben steppes. In pursuing our journey, we kept the Sarpa constantly on our left. At five in the afternoon, we reached a valley called the Valley of Worms, because the water of a well which it contains, is full of worms. Here we found upwards of fifty tents of the Calmucs of the horde of Zerren Ubaschi, who refreshed us with tschigan. Whilst we were at this place, a Gezull, (or priest of an inferior order,) who had learnt the object of our journey, came to us, and asked us jeeringly for religious instruction. We replied that we should deliver our books to his chief, and that if he wished to be instructed, he might make application to *him*. Another Calmuc, who had heard that some families had left the Coschudan horde, at the instigation of the people of Sarepta, took it into his head that we wanted to increase our colony by an additional supply of Calmucs; he therefore let us know secretly, that

he was ready to steal a considerable number of children for us, if we would pay him well.

Further on, we were followed by a well bronzed old Calmuc on horseback, who probably expected to obtain a few leaves of tobacco, under one pretence or another; he turned back, however, with horror, on seeing a moderate sized serpent before us, (which we afterwards killed); it struck his superstition as a bad omen. This afternoon, we met some Russian merchants, and a company of Astracan merchants, with their two-wheeled carts. At six o'clock, we had the White Sea (Zagen nuhr) to our left, reaching to the arm of the Sarpa, and containing a multitude of little islands. We afterwards bent our course more to the right, by which we lost sight of the Sarpa entirely, and were forced to pass the night in the steppes, without water.

This night and the following morning, 2nd of June, we had some light showers of rain, from which, however, we found sufficient shelter under the carts. At sun-rise, we stretched towards the arm of the Sarpa, which had been described to us as so shallow that we might cross it in carts: we reached it at seven o'clock, in a part where it forms a broad marsh of bitter water: here we

stopped and prepared our coffee, with some water which our old Tartar fetched from a sweet well, on the opposite shore. With some difficulty we crossed the marsh, and we found on the other side herds of camels, who had a plentiful provision in the sedges and salt weeds of the place. Not far from this spot, we came to two Kurganes (as the Russians call them,) or grave hillocks. Such tumuli are every where to be found on the steppes, and most plentifully on the willowy shores of the Volga, the Sarpa, the Manitsch, the Kuma, the Aktubah, &c. They probably belong to different ages, and different races of men, but the majority are undoubtedly to be ascribed to the Tartars of the ancient Kamschatkan empire, which was founded here. I saw a great number of these hillocks, near the ruins of their principal cities Serag and Tschigis. Others are probably of older date. Those on which there are stone pillars, in the Mogul style, appear to be of great antiquity, as they were in existence long before the time of Ruisbroek, in the year 1260, and were then regarded as the graves of a nation which had past away and been forgotten. From the antiquity of these graves, and the Mogul style of the pillars, they may not improbably have belonged

to that tribe of Moguls, who were inhabitants of this neighbourhood, in the fifth century, under the formidable name of Huns. Two of these hillocks exhibited the remains of a square building of brick, which resembled the foundation of a Tartar monument. From hence the whole country, which we traversed for six hours, till we came to the camp of Prince Erdeni, was sprinkled far and wide with groups of tents, and between them were herds of camels, horses, oxen, &c. The greater part of the hordes of the two chiefs, Erdeni and Zerren Ubaschi, were here. After incessant inquiries, where we should find the head-quarters of Erdeni and after being led at one time considerably out of our way, we arrived, at four o'clock in the afternoon, at the Baktur Malep (or place of heroes' whips,) where the Torgudan Princes were both encamped. Their tents were about a quarter of a mile asunder, and between them was a multitude of tents and cars belonging to the Russian, Armenian, and Tartar merchants, forming the market, or rather bazaar, of the horde. We halted in a grassy place, about two hundred paces behind the tent of Erdeni, and prepared ourselves for waiting upon the Prince.

CHAPTER V.

THE Calmuc huts or tents, in their own language gerr, and in the Russian kibitka, consist of a number of parts, which are easily put together, and taken to pieces. The tents are round, with a funnel-shaped roof, and a blunt point at the top of it. The frame-work, which is of willow laths about an inch thick, carved and painted in red stripes, forms a circular wall of lattice-work, not quite the height of a man; this lower frame consists of seven or eight parts, which can be taken up separately, and laid flat upon one another, so as to be conveniently moved. Where the laths cross, they are perforated, and fastened with leather thongs. In pitching the tents, six or eight compartments of lattice-work are fastened together with woollen bands, the door-way is then set up, which stands

by itself, and includes, in a wooden frame, two small folding doors.

Upon this, the whole circle of lattice-work is fastened, by broad woollen girths; and from this lower frame-work proceed poles on every side, which tend to meet in a common centre above; these are intercepted by a wooden hoop or crown, which holds them together, and upon which are fixed the transverse hoops forming the blunt point at the summit. A notch at the lower end of these poles is adjusted to a projection in the frame-work, and at the upper end they fit into holes in the hoop, which are made to receive them. Over these poles a few woollen girths are passed cross-wise, and attached to the frame-work below. The whole of this skeleton is covered with coarse, porous, unfulled felts of considerable size. Four of these are employed to cover the lattice-work and about half of the roof; a third smaller one hangs from the roof over the door, as a protection from wind and cold, and this can be drawn up at pleasure. All these pieces of felt are secured with woollen girths and bands; and lastly, a covering of felt is thrown over the hoops at the top, and the long ends hang down to the frame-work. One of these ends is always turned up

(on the side least exposed to the wind) not only to admit the light which is required in the hut, but to make an outlet for the smoke.

Of such tents the camp of Erdeni consisted. It stood in an inconsiderable valley, in the midst of which were a few wells. To the north of these were the royal tents, viz. that of Erdeni himself, the hall of justice, and the tent of Princess Mingmer; to the south, the Churulls (or temples) and the huts of the High Priest, or Lama. Round these, in a wide semicircle, were the tents of the inferior priests (or Gellongs,) and these again were enclosed by the ministers and servants of the Prince. The doors of all the tents were directed towards the principal temple, and the interior of the semicircle.

The tents of the Princes and Lama, and the huts which are used as temples, are distinguished not only by their commanding situation, but by their size, and by the whiteness of their covering. The residence of the Prince is marked by a long spear projecting on the left of the door-way, from the upper end of which hang two bunches of black horse-hair, fastened with a band. A smaller is placed in the same manner over the hall of justice. It

is possible that these bunches of hair may formerly have had some reference to the horse-tails, the banner of the Tartars and Turks, who were at one time neighbours of the Moguls. The camp of Erdeni contained about 100, and that of Zerren Ubaschi 150 tents. The arrangement was the same in both, and in all the other hordes which we afterwards visited, differing only in the number of tents, which is proportioned to the size of the tribe.

Having learnt from the Calmucs, that the day of our arrival (the 2d of June) was marked as fortunate in their astrological kalendar, we hastened to make our first visit to the Prince, the same evening. When we approached the tent, a servant came out to meet us, and inquired what we wanted; we desired to be announced, as people who had brought letters from the capital to the Prince, upon which we were readily admitted. We drew near to the tent from the right side, according to the Calmuc custom, for it is considered unmannerly to advance directly to the door, or to approach from the left side. We also took care not to tread on the threshold, an old Mogul ceremonial, which Ruisbroek observed in the camp of

Monketummer. We made the usual salutation to the Prince—Mende ssun tabe tiniger buis ta? "Are you quite hale and well?" to which he replied "Munde" (well;) after which we were obliged to sit cross-legged upon a carpet, in the Asiatic fashion. The Prince sat in the same position, on his cushion in the interior of the tent, by his wife Dellek; on their left was the little prince Raschi Sangdschai Dordsche, attended by his nurse. Erdeni is in his 42d year, of a short squat figure, and good countenance. He is intelligent, good-natured, lively and agreeable. When we entered he was playing on the Domber or Calmuc guitar. His wife Dellek is six-and-twenty, of a robust figure, and truly Calmuc face, with prominent cheek-bones. The Prince was dressed in a short Calmuc coat of blue cloth, white trowsers, a mottled silk waistcoat, and a thick velvet cap trimmed with sable, and ornamented with a red tassel and gold loop.

The Princess wore a blue and white dress, over a red silk petticoat ornamented with gold flowers; she had on her head a high square Calmuc cap of Persian gold muslin, trimmed (like her husband's) with sable, and with a large silk tassel. The tent

was about ten yards in diameter, and as many in height, and furnished all round, in the inside, with carpets, for the accommodation of visitors. Opposite to the door, was the Prince's throne or cushion, about an ell high, and covered with green cotton, and over it a kind of canopy of the same material. On each side was suspended an image; the left represented one of their dreadful idols Bansarakza; the right was a collection of astrological circles, and many figures of different colours. Both were designed for the protection of the young prince, and to shield him from evil. To the left of the Prince's couch, was the altar with a bench in front of it, and on the altar were silver vessels, with rice and other offerings; behind it a number of chests piled upon one another, and covered with a Persian cloth. Above was a wooden shrine, with a well-formed gilt image of one of their principal idol-deities, Schagdschamuni, the founder of their religion. On the right of the Prince, there was also a heap of chests, covered with Persian cloth, on which stood a few trinket boxes belonging to the Princess. These chests probably contained the valuables of the royal family, and those on the left of the throne,

the sacred writings, the idols, and other things pertaining to the altar. In the middle of the tent, there was a hearth, with a cresset and a common tea-kettle; on the left of the door stood a few pails and cans ornamented with brass hoops, containing sour mares' milk, or tschigan, the chief subsistence of the Calmucs at this time of the year.

Erdeni read the letter twice through with care, and then asked us our names, and the immediate object of our journey, which we endeavoured to explain in the most satisfactory manner. He next inquired, in a friendly manner, after his old acquaintances, Brother Schmidt of Petersburgh, and Loos of Sarepta, and rejoiced to hear of their welfare. After we had been treated with Calmuc tea and tschigan, we took our leave, and returned to our carriages.

This evening, and many times afterwards, we were entertained till night with the loud music of the Gellongs, accompanying their Tangud or Thibetian litanies; the drum, a kind of hautboy and great horns predominate in this music, and we could hear it distinctly from the churulls of both camps.

On the 3rd of June in the forenoon, we visi-

ted the bazaar, and bought a few things that we wanted. At this time a thick smoke was seen rising from a distanec, in the direction of the hills. It was supposed to be a fire on the steppes, and the Derbodians were suspected of having kindled it, to injure the Torguds. These conflagrations often rage with irresistible fury, laying waste whole tracts of land with such rapidity, that a man on a fleet horse can scarcely escape from them. Anxiety about the approaching fire, now put an end to the business of the bazaar, and every one looked out from his hut, or from some high spot of ground, to see which way the wind blew. Orders were in the mean time issued by the Prince, to stop the progress of the flames, and troops of Gellongs and *blacks* (plebeian Calmucs,) hastened with tent-sticks in their hands to beat out the fire. They shortly returned unsuccessful, with news that the flame was raging in the neighbouring sedges of a dry arm of the Sarpa, where it was impossible to extinguish it. They related to those who had staid at home, the incredible multitude of creatures which had been killed in the fire; birds who had made their nest in the sedges, serpents, frogs, lizards, &c. They des-

cribed the agonies of these animals very powerfully, with the liveliest colours, and not without exaggeration. The most eager attention, and entire sympathy with the sufferings of these creatures, was to be seen in every face, the more so perhaps, as the Calmucs, from their belief in the transmigration of souls, which is a tenet of their religion, feel themselves more nearly connected with all other animals. Their own loss they seemed at this time entirely to overlook, though the fire had consumed the food of that part of their cattle, which, since the Derbodian feud, was accustomed to winter there. Happily the conflagration did not cross the arm of the river, though it raged with great violence. When we came in sight of this place, a few days after, it presented white streaks as far as the eye could reach, interspersed with green islands, and when we left the neighbourhood six days after, the fire had not abated.

On our return from the bazaar, we prepared to make another visit to the Prince, and we laid out the presents, which (according to the Asiatic custom) we had brought for him and his wife: they consisted of Sarepta cloth, tobacco, and ginger-

bread. Just as we were about to set off, the Prince sent a messenger to us, to inquire whether we had brought any thing from Sarepta to sell. Upon this we made over our presents to the messenger, and desired him to follow us. Erdeni and his wife were much pleased with the presents, and each immediately smoked a pipe of the tobacco. Half the gingerbread was sent to the Lama, and a share allotted to all who were present, for according to their hospitable custom, this article was to be fairly divided. Whilst we were treated with Calmuc tea and tschigan, the Princess Mingmer, the prince's daughter, entered and welcomed us cordially. Mingmer is twenty years of age, and was married not long ago to a Coschudan prince, Bathur Ubaschi, who, for some unknown cause, sent her home, keeping at the same time her infant son. When she returned, she no longer found her mother Zebeck, who (as I mentioned before) had been sent to her brother the Derbodian prince; not being able to agree with her new mother, who is only a few years older than herself, and feeling on that account more keenly the want of her own mother and of her child, Mingmer secretly endeavoured to make

her escape; she was however brought back by the Torguds who were sent in pursuit of her, and laid in chains in the Churull. After she was released, she showed no farther desire to escape, and seemed resigned to her fate. When the Prince told her our names, and she heard mine, which the Calmucs call Zebih or Zebek, instead of Zwick, (because they find a difficulty in pronouncing two consonants together,) Mingmer exclaimed, "That is my mother's name." This afforded them amusement for some time, after which, our dress, caps, neckcloths, &c. underwent a thorough review, and the two ladies took paper models of some of these articles, each vyeing with the other in skill, and the Prince looking on, as an *arbiter elegantiarum.*

When this friendly diversion was over, we took an opportunity of reminding the Prince of our business, and of sounding his inclination on the subject. We told him that the Russian Bible Society were then translating books of holy writ into the Calmuc tongue, and that it was the wish of our pious Emperor, that all the nations of his mighty empire should have access to the word of life, and obtain from it health and salvation for

their immortal souls: that, (as Count Nesselrode's letter had already announced,) we were come to distribute the Scriptures in his tribe, to all who were desirous of receiving them, and that we implored his gracious and speedy assistance, that we might discharge our commission, and proceed on our journey. He replied in a very polite manner, that, before he could give his answer, he must confer with Prince Zerren Ubaschi, and with his Lama. When we had taken our leave, a servant followed us to say, that the Prince had yesterday desired his shepherd to send us a sheep, but that it would not arrive till the next day, because the present, according to the astrologers, was not propitious for the purpose. Probably this was only an excuse, and the intention had been formed after receiving our presents.

Before this time, none of the Calmucs had troubled themselves about us, except that some, who were curious, inquired what we were come for: now that they saw us honoured by the Prince, they thronged to us, and sought our friendship. This is quite the character of the nation! they regulate their behaviour slavishly by that of their

rulers, and if the latter be changed, the former will speedily alter. They are, in general, distrustful of foreigners, and will not, in their presence, depreciate their superiors, or betray any of their misdeeds. To each other, they are exceedingly faithful, particularly when the object is to conceal from a foreigner the theft of a Calmuc; if they are pushed hard, they will make good the loss themselves, and take their chance, rather than give up the offender.

Amongst our other visitors, came the owners of the neighbouring tents, illustrious officers of the Prince's household, his Tschigaitschi, (or mare-milker) his Temahlschi, (or camel-keeper) and others, who were desirous of our friendship. With many compliments, they invited us to a Calmuc tea-party, at which they proposed, that as they were so fortunate as to have us for neighbours, we should form a lasting chottun (or society,) with them; they assured us that even when the horde migrated, they would not leave us, and only entreated that if the Prince should honour us still farther, we would not despise them, but continue their friends. These people supplied us with

milk for our tea, and for other purposes, as well as their poverty would permit them, and, during the ensuing marches, they kept us always in their vicinity.

At this tea-party, it was resolved to clear out a well near our carriages, which had latterly been choked up, and the pit used for other purposes. Our Tartars began the work the following day, and soon found some water, which however was bitter: the Russians from the bazaar enlarged the well afterwards, and at last, the Calmucs of our chottun dug it still deeper, so that they had all a claim to draw water from the well, which occasioned some strife. When this well, which was about eighteen feet deep, was completed, they bought some brandy at the bazaar with eighty copecks, (which had been given them by a Gellong who was riding by, to reward them for their useful work;) and we were then invited solemnly to pronounce a blessing over the well. They gave us some of the water to taste, and we then took a little of the brandy, and expressed a wish that the well might be blessed. Immediately after the ceremony, the cattle were watered from the well, and water was given gratis to every one who asked for it.

After our tea visit, we waited upon the Prince Zerren Ubaschi, and took with us the presents which were designed for him, and which were of the same sort as those which we had presented to Erdeni. Zerren Ubaschi is about thirty years of age, above the middle height, slender, and well-looking. When we visited him, he wore a loose violet-coloured robe of cotton; he was sitting upon a cushion in the interior of his tent, opposite to the door; the tent, which was roomy and clean, without any splendour, was arranged for the most part like that of Erdeni, but it was smaller, as the Prince is a widower. After the salutation, he invited us to sit down, as we had done at Erdeni's, on the right of the throne, on the same side with the altar. After he had particularly inquired our present business, our name and profession, he appeared a little vexed that we had not brought him a letter from the minister. He professed also to be ignorant of the contents of the letter to Erdeni, and wished us to let him see it, which we could not do, as it was no longer in our possession. We told him that Prince Erdeni had said, he should confer with him, and his Lama, and that we therefore commended ourselves to his gracious assistance; we added, that it was the wish of the

Emperor, that the Scriptures should be supplied to all Calmucs who were willing to receive them. His answer did not imply any opposition, but he sheltered himself under the pretext, that *he* had received no recommendatory letter from government. On being reminded that Erdeni's Lama was to be a party to the deliberation, he answered hastily, that he had nothing to do with that Lama, and that there was no Lama in his own tribe.

After we had been treated with Calmuc tea, and chatted a little about our past and future travels, we took our leave. The same evening, two horsemen came to us, with a fine sheep which they had brought at Zerren Ubaschi's command, though by Erdeni's account it was an unlucky day for the purpose. We permitted the sheep which Erdeni had promised, to stand over for a time, till we were more in want of it. We were surprised during our visit to Zerren Ubaschi, to perceive a Testament upon the bench before the altar. This was the only copy which met our eyes during our whole journey, and we had no opportunity of inquiring where it came from. All the time we staid with the Prince, there was a

Gellong sitting behind us, (probably as a spy from the priests) or busied in arranging the vessels at the altar.

On the 4th of June, in the forenoon, we visited the chief priest of the horde, (or Lama) and took with us a present of tobacco and gingerbread. He is about thirty, with a countenance indicating at the same time good-nature and bigotry. Contrary to the custom of other ecclesiastics of his rank, who, to counterfeit sanctity, put on a grave insensibility, and speak little and like an oracle, to give themselves an appearance of wisdom, he was both polite and conversable, without in any way lowering his dignity. When we arrived he was sitting cross-legged, on a high cushion, in a loose yellow robe, with the red Orkimtschi (or scarf) of a Gellong over his left shoulder, and a large cap trimmed with fur on his head, like those which the Gellongs usually wear. He was playing mechanically with the beads of his rosary, without seeming to know what he was doing. His handsome tent was well furnished with religious vessels, and on the splendid altar-table, besides cups, there was a stand for books, many beautiful Krudns (or prayer machines) with Sanscrit characters in

gold, and some images and pictures of their gods. On the carpets, which were spread all around the interior of the tent, there were two rows of Gellongs, clad according to their respective dignities, in red and yellow, and drinking tschigan with great assiduity; this liquor was supplied by the Gezulls, from two large vessels full of it, which stood in the middle of the hut. After the salutation, the bald-headed Gellongs, at a wink from their chief, drew their ranks closer to make room for us, and we were treated with tschigan, out of cups of honour of maple wood. The Lama pretended to be ignorant of the object of our journey, though he had no doubt been informed of it, both by his watchful servants, and by the Prince himself; for it is seldom that any thing is determined in a horde without the advice of the Lama, and the business in question belonged especially to his own department. It seemed however to all the rulers of the horde, a matter of considerable importance, and therefore they endeavoured, each to shift the responsibility to another. When we had explained to the Lama the cause of our visit, he turned the conversation, and inquired after Brother Loos, whom he had known many years

ago, and then asked if we meant to leave the horde the next day? We replied, that our plans depended upon the Prince's answer, and that we were therefore unable to fix the time of our departure. The sign was then given, by a few strokes on a metal basin, in the neighbouring Churull, for the priests to assemble, and we took our leave.

This is perhaps the most convenient opportunity for a short account of the religion of Buddh, which the Calmucs profess: this will throw some light on their ecclesiastical establishment, and also on the religious customs to which we shall hereafter have occasion to allude.

The religion of the Calmucs, and of the other Mogul nations of Upper Asia, was probably derived in early ages from India. They revere as its founder, Schag Schamuni, who lived in India long before the time of Christ, and delivered instructions, which were committed to writing by his disciples, in part, soon after his death, and the rest at a later period. It takes its name of Buddhaism, from the worship of the God Buddh; it is also called by the name of its priests or Lamas. Being oppressed in its native country

by the Bramins, (so called from their God Brama,) it was propagated the more extensively in the neighbouring countries, and now reigns in China and Japan, in Thibet, (which is its throne,) and over all Mongolia. It was established in Thibet 400 years before the birth of Christ; thence it made its way, in 1250, to the Moguls, and soon became the sole and universal religion amongst them.

Buddhaism knows nothing of one Almighty God, the Maker of heaven and earth; in its creed, God is one with the world, and every thing was produced out "of the Eternal existence of the Universe." From infinite space, (in the Mogul language, Chagossun Agur,) every thing that is and was, material and immaterial, animate and inanimate, arose by circular motion! Highest in the scale of spiritual existence, is Buddha, (in the Calmuc Burchen,) the Divine Being, who is manifested in many Buddhas or Burchans, some complete, but most of them incomplete. Next in order are the six classes of pure spirits, (Tangri,) amongst whom is Chormuzd, the guardian angel of the earth; the impure and unfriendly spirits (Assuri); the pure inhabiting the summit, the impure the

foot of Mount Summer, in the centre of the earth's surface, and waging ceaseless war against one another. These are followed by men and terrestrial animals, and these again by the monsters of purgatory, (Birid) and the hellish brood of the interior of the earth. These six classes of living beings continue in regular and unalterable order, that is to say, in a regular gradation of good and bad; but the separate individuals of each class, in the perpetual transmigration of souls which takes place, change from one class to another. This circle of migration is called, by a metaphorical image, Ortschilang, the infinite stormy ocean. On its shore, that is exempt from farther migration, are the complete Buddhas.

All other beings, from the highest of the Tangri, to the lowest of the hellish monsters, are destined to reach the shore from the Ortschilang, that is, to rise by transmigration to the ranks of Buddhas. If this should be accomplished by all, in the Galap or Kalpa (the complete period containing one million years;) if all creatures have become united with Buddh, then Buddh himself is to be again swallowed up in the eternal and original universe. We are now in the fourth period,

under the direction of the Buddh Schagdschamuni. At its commencement, this god left his divine abode, and was born in the kingdom of Magad in India, that he might be an instructor and saviour of all beings, by freeing them from the Ortschilang. Eighty years after, when he had perfected himself as a Buddha, he left this disguise, to govern the world for a period of a thousand years. He sent the divine Chomschin-Bodhissadoa, into the snowy Tangut, (or Thibet) to whom he imparted his instructions, and particularly the formula Om-ma-ni-pad mel-chum, the meaning of which nobody has ever revealed; it is, however, the root of all knowledge, the path of salvation for all creatures, and the mere repetition of it, though it be but *once*, is an infinite merit in the estimation of the Buddh Schankiamuni. Chomschin is the most reverenced of all the Buddhs in Thibet, (except Schagdschamuni himself,) since it was he who undertook the conversion of the nation, and introduced the form of prayer which is for ever on the lips of all the Buddhaists. He is at all times incarnate in the person of the Dalai Lama, who lives (as Chomschin once did in his own person,) in a temple on

the Thibetian Mount Putala, where he receives divine honours. Another Bogdo, or grand Lama, (a title which is taken by all the high priests of Thibet,) lives at Teschilunbo, and is also an incarnate Buddh; indeed, the soul of a Buddh or Burchan, is considered to be united to every Lama. The Gellongs also, and the Khans or Princes, have souls of a higher order; the "blacks," or common people, of an inferior; but all souls, in the process of transmigration, may rise by good works, or fall by bad. Self-inflicted tortures and penance, such as the Hindostan Faquirs endure, are not accounted meritorious by the Buddhaist, as they are by the disciples of Brama; but good works of mercy towards all living creatures, without limit or exception, such as preserving the life of an animal instead of putting it to death; also the strictest observance of the written rules, and more particularly the frequent repetition of the above-mentioned form of prayer, and a great veneration for the priests. The three costly jewels, (Ardani) or the summary of all that deserves respect, according to the doctrine of the Buddhaist priests, are Burchan, Religion, and the Ecclesiastical order; and these three are all united in the

Lama. The poor man is accordingly directed to reduce his complex system of theology into an attachment to the three jewels. To this is added many a popular superstition, handed down by the poets, of Tangris and Assuris, domestic and mountain spirits, dwelling in mountains and streams, and interfering with a beneficent or malicious influence, in all human affairs; of the fabulous Mount Summer in the centre of the surface of the earth, surrounded by seven golden hills and four continents, some inhabited by men, and some by creatures resembling men, of different forms and habits of life; of the earthly paradise (or the kingdom of Suckawadi,) west of Thibet, the heaven of distinguished saints, who have risen to the rank of imperfect Buddhas, and can only descend to earthly existence, in the person of a Khan or a Lama; of the dwelling of the Assuri (Erlik-Chan) in the interior of the earth, in a palace with sixteen iron walls, surrounded by the purgatorial fires of Birid, and of the hell beneath, &c.

The ecclesiastics of this religion are high priests or Lamas, priests or Gellongs, Gezulls or ministers, and Manschi or pupils: they are all unmarried, and are reverenced by the common

people, as beings of a higher order. Their learning, amongst the Calmucs at least, is confined to reading prayers and holy writings in the Thibet language, which few of them understand. They are very numerous in all the hordes.

In the afternoon of the 4th of June, a Saissang (or noble) presented himself to us, with some attendants leading a camel, upon which, by command of Prince Erdeni, they had brought us a tent. It was forthwith set up, and we took possession of it. This hut was one of the smallest and worst in the Torgudan horde, and betrayed its age, by its disposition to come to pieces. It had been fetched from the shore of the Sarpa, and belonged to the horse-keeper of the Churull. The diameter might be four short paces, the height about as much, and the door was not quite two feet high! We were, nevertheless, happy to find our outward condition so much improved, for we had more room than in our carriage. We had scarcely established ourselves with our goods and chattels, when a servant arrived, with a wooden can of tschigan, which the Prince had sent as a welcome. According to the Calmuc custom, we each of us drank three cups, in honour

of the giver, and what remained supplied us for the rest of the day. Such presents, which were exceedingly precious to us, on account of the heat of the weather, were sent almost daily from the Prince, by which he did us real service.

As we had not received the promised answer from Erdeni, were solved, on the 5th of June, to pay him an afternoon visit, but we found only the Princess and her servants at home: the Prince himself, with a numerous company of Gellongs and nobles, was playing at cards in the hut of justice, a few steps from his tent. They drank tschigan in great abundance, and this liquor taken to excess, produces a slight intoxication. The Princess took the opportunity of bringing out her ornaments for our admiration. Amongst these, we particularly noticed a golden ear-ring, with a fine pear-shaped pearl, of the size of a large hazel-nut: this, she said, was an heir-loom in her family. We also perceived a beautiful rosary, made of the smooth black kernels of an unknown fruit, with coral and round onyx-stones interspersed. In showing us a richly-embroidered purse, and a pair of red Morocco boots, the Princess asked us if the German ladies had any ornaments to compare with

hers, which we were compelled to answer very humbly. The conversation afterwards fell upon images, and she took the opportunity of inquiring whether the images of our gods were as splendid as theirs. We informed her, that we had statues, but that we did not worship them, but addressed our prayers to the Supreme Being, in spirit, and with the heart. She replied that it was the same amongst themselves; but as the senses could not reach the invisible Deity, they liked to have a visible representation before them in prayer, but that this was not essential, and that, in cases where they could not have the images, (in travelling across the steppes for example,) they were accustomed to worship without any symbol addressed to the senses. "For," said she, "the All-wise knows and sees every thing, even the interior of the heart, and observes whether we pray to him, at home, or on the steppes, with an image, or as the Invisible." After this, when we were conversing about the formation of the world, the Princess expressed a wish to see a map, which we promised we would show her before long. During our stay, the Prince took so much notice of us, as to leave his game for a few moments to welcome us; apolo-

gizing at the same time for not receiving our visit, as he was eager to join a party in the next hut. After he returned, the company became loud and riotous, upon which the Princess seemed uneasy, and looked often through the lattice-work of her own tent, into the hut of justice, which she could easily do, as the lower felts of both tents were turned up, to let in the air. She said once to her nurse, "The tschigan has made them merry over there; the Germans will think they are all drunk!" We were obliged to take our leave for this time, without any farther conference with the Prince, and to wait for a better opportunity. On the following day, the 6th of June, it presented itself. We took with us the promised maps (some good surveys of these steppes,) with which the Prince, his wife, and daughter, were all highly delighted. Dellek looked for her early home, on the Volga, by the Bogdo mountain, where her father, a petty prince, fed his herds; Mingmer wanted to see the situation of the Coschudan camp, into which she had married; and Erdeni, the position of his own horde, and the road by which we had reached it: they were all amazed to find these places correctly laid down. I pre-

pared a copy of this chart for the Prince, at his request. We had thanked him for the sheep, and for the loan of the tent, at the beginning of our visit, and before we left, we took an opportunity of inquiring the result of the conference with Zerren Ubaschi and the Lama, about our affairs, as we presumed it had, by that time, taken place. The Prince answered politely, that the consultation had not yet taken place, and that the Saissangs must also be convened, that he might be able to give a considerate, clear, and prudent reply. We were therefore obliged to take patience, as the Prince had given us a favourable reception, but had not sanctioned us in distributing the Scriptures amongst his people. If we had attempted to do this without the Prince's permission, (although he had not expressly forbidden it,) his influence would have operated in secret, and we should by no means have effected our purpose, for not one of his subjects would have received a book from us, without the decided permission of the Prince, or the certainty of his approbation. Moreover, we could neither have explored the wide steppes in search of the scattered detachments of his tribe, without guides, nor found our

way to one of the neighbouring hordes. For all these reasons, we determined to wait, with all possible patience, for the Prince's decision, and in the mean time to leave nothing undone which might further our object; particularly, as we saw that our success in this instance would very much affect our reception in other hordes, because Erdeni is the oldest of the Torgudan princes, and has the reputation of being a shrewd and experienced man.

In the afternoon, we visited many of the Gellongs in the ecclesiastical circle of huts, and amongst many ignorant, we found one, a young man of nine-and-twenty, who was particularly distinguished by his acuteness and learning. When we entered his hut, he was employed in translating a Thibet book into the Calmuc language, and two Gezulls, his pupils, were looking over him. In conversing about the Tangud language and character, he tried our skill in reading both that and the Calmuc, and paid us many compliments on our proficiency, as few (even of the Gellongs) of his own nation possess this knowledge. He begged that we would grant him our friendship, for, said he, "As we have similar

learning, we are fitted to be friends." To try the accuracy of his acquaintance with the Tangud language, we showed him the Lord's prayer in that tongue, from the Patris Georgii Alphabetum Tibetanum, which he immediately translated correctly into the Calmuc language, as a proof of his knowledge. This was the only specimen of the kind which we met with during our travels, and it was the more surprising, as the Calmucs possess but very indifferent assistance for the acquisition of this language. The Tangud character is derived from the old Indian Sanscrit, and, like that, is written from left to right. Except in this particular, it has, on a superficial survey, much resemblance to the Chaldean or Hebrew. Most of the writings which remain amongst the Mogul tribes, are in the Tangud language and character, because the Moguls derived both these, together with their religion, from Thibet. It therefore behoves every young ecclesiastic to learn enough of this language, to be able to join in the chorus of the Tangud litany; more is not required of them, and it is a rare thing to find one who knows any thing of the language. There is no original Mogul or Calmuc literature; a few

ancient and rare historical writings excepted, it consists of translations from the Tangud. The greater part of the Gellongs are ignorant of the Mogul or Calmuc character; and they even boast that they know nothing of the Mogul, (which is the character of the blacks, or plebeians,) and only understand the Tangud, the character of the priests and the learned, which is so highly esteemed that it is unlawful to use it on common occasions.

Our learned Gellong informed us, that the Lama had some old Burat-Mogul writings, which nobody in the horde could read. For that reason he wished us to give him an alphabet of this character, but we had not one with us.

During these few days, our Tartars had dug a new well, because there was endless discussion with the Russians and Calmucs, about the use of the old one. They found, at the depth of about eighteen feet, three springs of sweet water, which soon filled the well, five or six feet deep. Their joy was the greater, as the water in the old well had become bitter. Every body came to our well, and tried to make friends of our people, that they might have some of the water. Unluckily, our

triumph was soon over, for in a few days, the water of the new well was the bitterer of the two, owing to a vein of blue marl over which it flowed. Both these wells were called by the Calmucs, Nemeseh Chuduk, (German wells,) in honour of us, and the name will probably be retained for generations, as a memorial of our visit.

On the 7th of June, the horde of Prince Zerren Ubaschi separated from that of Erdeni, and withdrew towards the hills, on account of the small-pox and measles, which had showr themselves in the tribe, and are greatly feared by the Calmucs. In a cleft called Selme, Zerren Ubaschi (as we were informed by Erdeni,) offered certain well formed clay cones, which the Gellongs prepared in copper moulds, and which they call Zaga; this ceremony was probably intended to appease the Gods, and induce them to remove the disease from his people.

As the object of our mission began now to be generally known, we were often beset with jesters, who asked us sneeringly, if we wanted to make them into Russians or Germans.

In the cool of the evening, Erdeni amused himself not far from our hut, with shooting at the

birds who flew over his head, with his bow and arrow; he failed however of doing them any damage. He seems to have been very fond of the chase in his youth, and possesses a number of Turkish muskets, inlaid with silver and gold, which he once showed us.

On the 8th of June, there was more music than ever, from the Churull, this being one of their fast-days, of which they have three every month; the 8th, 15th and 30th, according to their manner of reckoning, which differs from our's, as they always begin the month at the new moon.

As we had heard that Erdeni's horde was also about to migrate, we went to the Prince in the afternoon, to learn whether this was true, and also to inquire about the answer, which he had promised to give us. He excused himself on the last head, by the absence of Zerren Ubaschi, which, he said, prevented his giving us a decisive answer, and he proposed that we should proceed with our journey to the other hordes, and return to him again, as he meant to winter near this part of the Sarpa. We could not adopt this plan, and we pressed him more earnestly, to declare whether he

would permit us (in pursuance of our commission, from a higher quarter,) to distribute the Scriptures amongst his people, or not. He endeavoured to avoid a direct answer, and sheltered himself again under the pretext of Zerren Ubaschi's absence, adding at last, that before we left his horde, he would receive books from us, and give us a written engagement, that they should be read by his subjects. We assured him, that we required no such certificate, and only desired that the Scriptures should be disseminated amongst his people, and that we wished to know how many copies would be wanted for his horde. To our surprise, he asked for *two*, one for himself and one for the Lama, and he added that this would be sufficient, as the common people were occupied with their work, and the care of the cattle, and the priests were only acquainted with the Tangud character. As this did not content us, we besought him to give us a letter to his subjects, stating that every one might receive books from us without fear, and we would then travel through his horde with this letter, and offer the Holy Scriptures to the people. He willingly acceded, and promised to prepare such a document at his new camp, at present he

was not at leisure—he therefore requested that we would accompany him in his march, and the rather, as it is not customary among the Calmucs for friends to separate shortly before a removal of the camp. For this reason, he had already ordered a man and a camel to be in readiness to transport our tent. As we did not see any other plan we could adopt, nothing remained but to migrate with the horde, though our visit, which had already lasted a week, must necessarily be much protracted by it. The Prince now entered upon other topics, and inquired after the affairs of Germany, France, and England. One of his attendants, who had been at Paris in the war of 1814, under the command of Seredschah, (who had many Calmucs under him) now related much of what he had seen in foreign countries. The circumstance that in Germany the horses' shoes often strike fire whilst they are running, excited the wonder of all who were present, and we were obliged to confirm it by our testimony. It is a sight which can never be witnessed amongst the Calmucs, because they do not shoe their horses: the soil of the steppes, which is generally clay, and occasionally sand, does not require it. Amongst

other inaccuracies, this man attested that the English had wings, as he had seen, by pictures of them in France! He had no doubt mistaken "angels" for "English." He farther declared, that in France he saw the moon so low down in the heavens, that one would have thought, one might throw a Zalma (or noose for horses) over its horns. This occasioned some inquiries from the Prince, about the astronomical knowledge of the Germans, and particularly about the fabulous Mount Summer, which, according to Calmuc science, is the pillar of the universe. We described to him in a few words, the theory of the heavens, and of our earth, on which no Mount Summer has ever been found, though the Europeans have acquired an extensive knowledge of its surface, and sailed round it often. We told him also, that the European nations were well acquainted with India, (which the Calmucs call Emlkah) and had considerable possessions in that country; but that the Asiatics are at present inferior in knowledge, and particularly in astronomical knowledge, to the Europeans; as an instance of which, we mentioned the calculation of eclipses, which the Asiatics do not attempt

The Prince heard us with great attention and wonder, and at last observed, that the Buddhaist sages of former times, who resided in India, had possessed much astronomical knowledge, which was afterwards lost,—that they were aware of the present superiority of the Germans, in this respect, and that it was owing to their descent from the Indian Bramins, who had taught them their science. This genealogy is recorded in their sacred books; and it is remarkable how prevalent a saying it is amongst the Calmucs, that the Germans are descendants of the Bramins. There is also a tradition amongst the Tartars, that the Germans had migrated, in remote antiquity, from the Persian province of Kermann. It is possible that the appellation of Germanni, by which they were known to the Romans, coming to the knowledge of these tribes, may have occasioned this tradition, by the similarity in sound, to the name of the province Kermann. I did not however see any of the documents, on which this assertion is grounded.

Whilst we were with the Prince, a Russian merchant appeared at the door, and having received a sign to approach, he dropped on one knee

on the outside of the tent, and explained to the Prince in the Calmuc language, that some horses had been stolen from him, although they were shut up. He pointed out some of Erdeni's subjects, whom he suspected of the theft, because he had heard that they meditated a marauding expedition against the Derbodians, for which object they had very likely taken his horses. This man had been amongst the Derbodians, and to the Russian Ober Pristaw, after he had lost his horses, but had not been able to hear any tidings of them. The Prince received his testimony graciously, and gave immediate orders that search should be made for the beasts.

Towards evening the sky clouded, and the air became cooler; a change which was celebrated openly, as the work of the Gellongs, for the accommodation of a Tangud Prince of the Tandik horde, who was travelling to Astracan. We were frequently asked, on this occasion, whether the Germans could also alter the state of the weather. A few Gellongs of the class of Surchai-schi (or professors of astrology,) pretend to this art, and beguile the ignorant multitude by this means, of their offerings. They give out that it is exercised

by reading certain Tangud incantations, and other jugglery; and that if the legend of the Mogul Gezur-Chan be read in harvest, it will cause a fall of snow and a storm. When the desired state of weather is not likely to follow, they are cunning enough to excuse themselves under various pretences, that the reputation of the art may not suffer. In summer for instance, it is a great sin to change the heat often, for coolness or rain, because a number of tender insects (who, according to their theory of transmigration, are nearly connected with themselves,) must be destroyed by it.

The Calmucs consider that the Kirguses are their superiors in this art; and they ascribe to their agency, the terrible snow-storms in winter, which are commonly driven to them from the east. The Kirguses are generally at war with the neighbouring Calmucs, on account of their perpetual depredations.

CHAPTER VI.

JOURNEY WITH THE HORDE FROM THE 12TH OF JUNE, TO THE 3RD OF JULY.

THE 9th of June was appointed for the migration of the horde, and as we had not been able to learn at what time of day this was to commence, we held ourselves in readiness from an early hour in the morning, till two o'clock, when the whole camp was in motion. The Lama, with his priests, headed the march, after which, every one followed according to his will and convenience. The Prince and his family remained by the side of their tents and goods (which were packed up on camels,) until the whole camp had broken up; he then followed rapidly, and took his place in the van. We mingled with the crowd, and permitted our tent, which had been packed

upon a camel, by the Prince's order, to go on before us; the camel-driver had taken his place on the beast, and the unevenness of the steppes prevented us from keeping up with these long-legged animals. The main body of this moving multitude extended more than a verst in breadth, and consisted of single columns of camels, bearing tents, household goods, and children, who were stowed in baskets; next followed troops of horses, cattle and sheep, with a few drivers on horseback. Nobody performs a migration on foot; indeed, the Calmucs are seldom induced to walk any great distance—men, women, and elder children, all ride; we even saw mothers on horseback with infants, who were hardly out of the cradle, and babes at the breast. Elder boys and girls ride sometimes at full gallop, run races with one another, and practise hunting with dogs, and fencing. Sometimes a company of girls purposely wait till the whole train has left them behind by several versts, and then run races to join them. These marches are a kind of general show and rejoicing to the Calmucs, in which every one has an opportunity of displaying his wealth and splendour. The men ride forward in groups, dressed

in their state clothes, and armed with musquets; when they have considerably outstripped the main body, they encamp on the steppes till it overtakes them. The matrons ride in their best clothes on the finest horses, in front of the troop, and hold in their hand the bridle of the first camel, to which all the others are fastened. Large Persian or Russian carpets are spread over the packages on the camels, and hang down almost to the ground on both sides; the animals themselves are frequently ornamented with red ribbons. Poorer families who possess no camels, load their cattle with children and goods, and ride upon them themselves. Some few employ Tartar cars, (or arbas,) to convey their moveables. That part of Erdeni's horde which had encamped to the west and north of us, not thinking themselves safe from the Derbodians when we were gone, had joined the detachment; we could form no proper estimate of the numbers of the united troop, as we could not, at any time, see the whole of it, but with this reinforcement, it was undoubtedly very numerous. There might be about five hundred camels, which were employed in carrying burdens. We halted at half past eight in the evening, on an arm of

the Sarpa, along which we had been travelling twenty or twenty-five versts in a southerly direction. As we were to proceed on our journey the next morning, only the upper part of the tents was set up; and we followed the example of the Calmucs in this respect, as we must otherwise have unpacked the whole load of the camel, every time we stopped for the night. A few showers of rain had fallen in the course of the day, and the moisture evaporated so quickly from the heated earth, that it formed a complete mist in our little enclosure, and compelled us to open our felt-covering, and let in the fresh air. This day was (for us,) a regular fast; in the morning we had prepared no food, on account of the uncertainty of our departure, and at the place where we encamped in the evening, we could find no sweet water to boil for our tea. Our little store of bread and biscuit had failed us long since: our only provision was the remnant of beef which we had brought with us, mutton (commonly dried in the sun,) and Calmuc tea, or sometimes coffee, with which we had Russian biscuit, made of wheat flour unsalted.

Tschigan we could not now procure for the

Prince himself was but sparingly provided with it. The food of the Calmucs, at this time, was simply and solely sour milk—the rich had tschigan or mares'-milk—the poor, airak or cows'-milk. None but the Prince, and the great men, had flesh in their kettles, for the whole wealth of the nation consists in their flocks and herds, and they are forced to use them sparingly. In winter, when they are short of milk, they buy meal from the Russians who inhabit the shores of the Volga, and of this they make thin porridge, (called b den) which is to supply the place of milk. The Calmuc tea, which I have so often mentioned, is prepared from a sort of tea which is unknown in Europe; it is imported from China, to Siberia, and consists of the coarse leaves and stalks of the plant, which are formed into cakes sixteen inches long, eight inches broad, and more than an inch thick. A portion of this is cut off with a knife, and boiled with butter, or fat from the tails of their sheep, a little salt is added, and sometimes milk. Before these last ingredients are put into the kettle, the settlement of the tea is fished out with a bag and an iron hook, (a good deal like a fish-hook) and these leaves are added on the next occasion to the

fresh tea. When all is ready, tea is ladled out of the kettle, with a wooden spoon, and served in the common wooden bowls or cups which the Calmucs use to drink out of.

We started again on the 10th of June, at four in the afternoon. We had already made tea and coffee, in the hope of carrying a portion of the latter with us on our journey. Our Tartars fetched water for us from the arm of the Sarpa, which here forms a chain of lakes connected with one another, and overgrown with sedges, the habitation of crowds of water-fowl: they found that the water in the deeper parts of the river was less salt and bitter than that near the shore; but we could hardly eat our rice, on account of its strong bitter flavour. At this place the Prince begged to borrow our fowling-piece, that he might have a few birds shot. After a few hours he sent it back with thanks, and with a goose which had been shot. The servants had killed two swans, and some geese. The shores of the dike were here overgrown with salt herbs, amongst which we spied many tarantula holes, and disturbed some of these creatures, which were of incomparably brighter colour than those we had seen at Sarepta.

During the afternoon's ride, we suffered greatly from thirst, but I was so fortunate as to obtain a cup of airak from an old Saissang, who belonged to the Toin, (or ecclesiastics,) and this refreshed me for a time. To get this airak, I rode with the old man by the side of the troop, for a couple of versts, till we came up with his camels. The good woman of the family then stopped, at the command of the Saissang, the camel which bore the leathern milk-vessel, knelt down, and I got the airak. A crowd of thirsty travellers thronged round in an instant, claiming hospitality, and not inclined to rest till they saw the milk-vessel emptied. At nine o'clock in the evening, when it was nearly dark, we halted at a spot entirely unprovided with water, and as it was too dark to collect the dry dung, no fire was kindled. One family, who usually encamped in our neighbourhood, had reached the place some time before us, and contrived to make tea, with water procured from a distance, and we were invited to partake of this tea. As we were to set off early the next morning, we did not use the roof of our tent, but passed the night in the open air.

On the 11th of June, at sun-rise, we renewed

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our journey. We had been flattered yesterday with the hope of soon finding water, but it was not till 11 o'clock, after we had travelled about 20 versts, that we came to a well, called Nasir's well, by which there was also a little lake with good water. Here we slaked our own thirst, and our horses' to our hearts' desire, and made tea, as soon as we had set up our tent.—Our horses were very much fatigued with this journey over the rugged pathless desert; and they had suffered greatly from thirst during this hot weather. There seemed to be water enough for the troop in this place for several days, but firing and food for the cattle were so scarce, that after a short rest, it was found desirable to proceed. We now made an unhappy discovery, that our store of brandy, which was intended to last through our travels, was by this time entirely spoiled with the heat and the journey. It had acquired an unpleasant turpentine or resinous smell and flavour, was milk white, and deposited a dirty sediment. This was probably the consequence of its having been adulterated by the Russian merchants at Zaritzin. We portioned some of it out, amongst the Calmucs who had rendered us any service; but

even they (who are by no means fastidious in such matters,) did not relish our brandy. In the evening, we received the sheep which the Prince had promised us; and the next day, (the 12th of June) our old Tartar killed it. As the flesh was not likely to keep sweet, on account of the heat, (the thermometer standing at twenty-nine of Reaumur,) we had it cut up into long strips, soaked in salt water, and tied upon strings in the shade of the tent, after which it was chopped into small pieces, and stowed in a leathern bag, as provision for the journey. We learnt this method of preserving it from the Calmucs, and experienced its utility. The flesh, when it came to be cooked, was tough it is true, but it was eatable almost to the end.

In the forenoon, (the 12th of June) we paid a visit to the Lama, but we found him very reserved. After he had exchanged a few words with us on indifferent subjects, he asked us if we had any request to prefer to him; we replied that we had not, but that we had made application to the Prince, (of which he had doubtless heard) and was now expecting an answer. He would not allow that he had received any infor-

mation, and pretended that he had only heard a report, that we had brought some writings about the religion of Jesus: he inquired why we had come to them first, instead of the larger hordes, and why we had not sent notice of our intention beforehand, that the Princes and Lamas might have agreed together, what line of conduct they were to take. We replied, that we came to them first, because the horde was nearest to us on our way; and that a command had been issued the year before, from Count Nesselrode to the Calmuc Pristaw, to inform the princes that we were coming. He did not seem to be aware of this, but immediately turned the conversation, and asked us whether we would wait for tea, or whether we would come again another time to drink tea. We took the hint which he designed, and withdrew. A visit which we wished to pay to the Prince, was frustrated, by its being a lucky day for cutting and dressing the hair. This fortunate opportunity was embraced by all the family, and in the Prince's tent as well as the others; we were therefore requested by a servant to postpone our visit till evening. When we were at last admitted, we found him busily engaged in writing, because he

had just received letters from the head Pristaw, in which he was required to send troops to the cordon on the frontier. The Prince sat on a cushion, at the open lattice of his tent, near the door, and laid his writing on the right leg, (which is the custom of the Calmucs,) filling his pen from time to time, from a paint-brush which he held in his left hand. When the letters were ready, a servant lighted a splinter of wood, and the Prince sealed them with his ring, on which was his name. While we were served with tea, the Prince told us that the march would be renewed the day but one after, because there was poor pasture here, and too little water; he added, that if he did not find good pasture, and good water nearer, he should proceed to the Caspian Sea. We now reminded him of the promised letter of permission, but he put us off till the next encampment; he would then exchange his letter for our Scriptures. When we were going away, he called after us through the lattice, that if we wanted any thing, he would supply us. From the behaviour of the Prince, and his conversation up to this time, as well as from that of the Lama, we saw very plainly that we were by no means welcome guests, but that

they were afraid to break with us, as we had been recommended by Government. We continued however to pay our visits to the Prince and Lama, with the same regularity; partly to show them the honour which was their due, and partly to remind them of our business, and learn what was their intention respecting it.

A Russian from Tschorniya, who had been some time in the camp, on account of a debt which he came to claim of the Prince, paid us a visit this day, because he had heard of us continually, (through his interpreter) and was curious to see what sort of people we were. On this occasion, he learnt for the first time, that there was a Bible Society, and the Bible itself, except the Psalter, was wholly unknown to him.

On the 13th of June, the camp still remained at Nasir's well. In the evening, about 6 o'clock, when the thermometer was twenty-seven of Reaumur in the shade, and in a current of air, violent gusts of wind came on, which made us fear that our tent would be overset; we fastened it as well as we could with pegs and bands, and were obliged to remain a good deal under its shelter. This tempest of wind continued the following day,

(the 14th of June) on which we continued our march at seven in the morning. As our camel was brought to us rather late, we were almost the last of the train. On our march, the Prince's camel-keeper, who was riding beside us, dressed in black velvet, beheld a ferret, on the steppes before us,—an unlucky omen on a journey. He immediately rode at it, and tried to kill it with his horse, that he might not incur the guilt of its death. As he did not accomplish it to his satisfaction however, we came to his help, and dispatched the creature with the butt ends of our whips. That he might have some hand in the affair, he now got off his horse, but it so happened that instead of a bit he had only a string in the horse's mouth, and as he forgot this in dismounting, it fell out and the beast left him behind. In this way the sight of the ferret was undoubtedly unlucky to him, for there he stood by the dead animal, with the string in his hand, without any horse. With the help of some other Calmucs, he was soon mounted again on his horse. At 10 o'clock, after a journey of about ten versts, we reached the place where we were to encamp: it was provided with a number of wells, called the

Chaltarihn Burra Chuluk, (or yellow grey wells,) which had no doubt been used by the Tartars, and other earlier nations. One of these wells had been formerly lined with wood, but was now in ruins. The water had an orange tinge, (from which the wells might derive their name,) and though rather thick, tasted well. On account of the high wind, which had not abated, we found it very difficult to manage our cookery; we did not want a fire in our tent when the thermometer was twenty-nine, and if we lighted it in the open air, we were in danger of setting fire to the steppes: we succeeded, however, with much caution and watchfulness, in keeping a fire in a hole dug for the purpose. On the following morning, the wind continuing to blow violently from the east, the thermometer at eight o'clock was twenty-seven of Reaumur; at noon it rose to thirty, and at seven in the evening it was still twenty-eight. We learnt this day that a young Calmuc, who had been left behind on our yesterday's march, with a broken arba, while his mother went to fetch help, was carried off by a party of Derbodians, probably with the hope of obtaining as a ransom, some

goods which had been taken by the Torguts. By this time it was evident that the Derbodians hung on our rear, but we heard nothing more of them, not even when Erdeni had issued any orders in consequence.

We were told by Astracan and Norgaid Tartars, who cross these steppes with wine from Taganrog to Astracan, and whose road lay by our wells, that the Derbodians were behind us, on the lower Sarpa, and on this side of the hills near the Don. If we had resolved to travel back to join the Derbodian horde, we should in the mean time have missed the other hordes who were then pasturing between the Volga and Sarpa, and who usually withdrew, later in the year, to the south and south-east. We saw that we could not conveniently visit all the Calmuc hordes, in one route; and we therefore determined to leave the Derbodians for the present, and to take all the other hordes in the neighbourhood, according to their position.

In the camp we found a few locusts, the first we had seen on our journey. In the evening, till late at night, we heard the screaming prayers of

the Gellongs, which were now without any accompaniment, and sounded so much the shriller and more monotonous.

The 16th of June was a Calmuc festival, for which the labours of the priests the evening before, were most likely preparatory. This day, their clamorous prayers and litanies, (accompanied by music,) resounded from break of day till late at night. Two great white banners, inscribed with Tangud characters, and ornamented with red ribbons and bows, were mounted a few steps from the tent of the Prince. The Calmucs call these banners Dazza. This feast-day, fast-day, or holy-day, consists much more in invocations of the idols and saints, and other ceremonies performed by the collected multitude of priests, than in the real fasting of the people, (to which the Calmucs are by no means inclined.) Every pious Calmuc endeavours, in a special manner, to recommend himself, on such days, by good works, and to abstain from causing the death of an animal. The prayers and litanies, which are addressed by the priests to the idols and saints, are of different kinds, according as the day is awarded, to a good or evil being. In the last case, the praying must

be incessant and as boisterous as possible, accompanied by the wildest music, so that the character of the idol may be inferred from the sound of the prayers, which are much more moderate when they are addressed to a good deity.

The water was now beginning to fail here also, and what there was, being surrounded by the Churuls and royal tents, and guarded, was difficult to get at. Our old Tartar succeeded in filling his can by the help of a stratagem. He went to the well, which was guarded by one of the Lama's servants, who forbade him taking any water. After much parley, he permitted him to draw a very small quantity. When the Tartar got down into the well, he asked the Gezull who guarded it, if he had ever heard a particular story, which he named. This excited the curiosity of the Gezull. The Tartar began to weave a tale of wonder, and the deluded watchman perceived too late, that the Tartar had completely filled his vessel. Horses and cattle were compelled to water from a well, at the distance of several versts; and many of our neighbours, in consequence, removed from this part. Whilst we were dining upon rice and dried flesh, a Gellong arrived from head-quar-

ters, with a Derbodian prisoner of distinction: their business with us, was to get our seal and signature, as witnesses to an engagement, that the Derbodian, when set at liberty, should return thirty horses, which had been taken from this Gellong by a party of Derbodian marauders. The Prince, who had been first applied to, refused to be witness, because, as an enemy to the Derbodians, he was not an impartial person, and he had referred them to us. As we also declined to meddle with the matter, the Gellong was forced to return with his prisoner, without despatching the business. The Derbodian had already remained thirty days in the hands of the Gellong, who chained him up every evening; as nothing could be got from him, and the revenge of his tribe became every day more to be dreaded, he was set at liberty the next morning, upon which he paid us a visit and wished us good-bye. As the more distant wells were now exhausted also, our Tartars, on the 17th of June, attempted to clear out an old well in the camp, in which they found water enough for us and our horses. The Prince had already resolved to proceed with his march, but he was forced to wait

some time, because those of his subjects who were to supply him with camels (for the Prince has none of his own,) were encamped at a distance. Even tschigan began now to fail so universally, that the scarcity was felt in the Prince's tent, and many of his servants came to us, in hopes of sharing our meals, which were by no means plentiful. If we had not laid in a sufficient store of rice, we should have suffered from the scarcity of provisions at head-quarters, a scarcity which could only be relieved by killing sheep, of which there was no great abundance. In this condition the caravan proceeded, at sun-rise on the 18th of June, towards a new place of encampment. Our old Tartar had drawn water for the journey, out of the Prince's well, in the depth of the night. We marched east-south-east, through a very uneven country, which every where presented the appearance of waves on the sea, but afforded better pasture than we had lately met with. Our troop occupied, as usual, many versts in length, and also in breadth, and we had seldom a perspective of more than a hundred paces. Here and there we spied on the heights a column, which was almost immediately

hid again in a valley, our own route varying in the same manner, so that we found ourselves sometimes in an elevated position, sometimes in a defile, other groups appearing unexpectedly, and again disappearing. We were reminded of a voyage on a stormy ocean, when a convoy bound to the same port, and separated by the waves, are descried at intervals. Wells have formerly been dug in these parts, as we could see by the ruins of those which are now nearly filled up; the Calmucs, however, think it too much trouble to clear them for use. This neighbourhood has, probably, been much more inhabited in former times than it is now, which may be inferred from the many remains of roads, and the number of grave hillocks. Far off on the left, we saw a Calmuc chapel, or Zaza, which was built as a memorial of a Torgud Lama. On this journey, the Princess Mingmer lost a large silver bell, which had been fastened to the trappings of her horse, and though a multitude of Calmucs went to search for it, the bell could nowhere be found. At half past ten, we reached Ulahstin, (or Meadow-well,) where we were to encamp; the thermometer was then thirty degrees of Reaumur in the shade and

in a current of air; at noon it was thirty-one in the shade, and thirty-eight in the sun, though a brisk east wind was blowing across it. Brother Schill had been seized, on the march, with a violent head-ache, and great weakness. Our first care therefore, was to pitch our tent and prepare his simple couch. The Prince designed to remain in this place, but there were few of his subjects at hand, except those belonging to the household, and the wells afforded little water. Our servants, and the neighbouring Calmucs, cleared out an old well, and found a tolerable supply of wat r.

On the 19th of June, in the forenoon, we made an attempt to negotiate with the Prince about the introductory letter which he had promised, but there were so many Gellongs about him, that we thought it an inauspicious moment for our business, and therefore postponed it till the afternoon. According to his desire, we presented him with two small volumes, containing the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and two little tracts. These were the contents of all the other books which we had brought. When the Prince saw the books, he asked, if we intended to give all his subjects as many as we had given to him. We replied, that

we should only trust books to those who could read: if we found learned men who wished for more than one book, we should willingly bestow more, but that the learning which was essential to salvation, was to be found in every one of them. After he had read a little while attentively, with his wife, he laid the books away, and asked us if we meant to force these books upon any one; which we answered in the negative. He then said he would examine their contents, and consult with the Lama and Saissangs, before he gave us any farther reply, and he proposed that we should, in the mean time, visit some other horde. We told him that our time would not allow us to do this, and that we wished much to despatch our business in his horde, in order to proceed to another; we therefore reminded him again of his long promised introductory letter. He showed great willingness on the subject, and conversed for some time, to our full satisfaction, on the form in which it ought to be drawn up; at last, however, he put us off till the next morning, that he might consult with the Lama. An old Gellong, who during our visit sat by the altar, carelessly twitching with his left hand the string which

set in motion the Prince's Kurdu, (or prayer-machine) and with his right was telling the beads of a rosary, then addressed himself to the Prince, and said, "If you take these books, all your subjects will take them." The Prince upon this seemed thoughtful, and said he would consult the Lama, whether he should receive the books or not. So powerful is the influence of the Priests amongst these people!

Just as undecided and cautious as the conduct of the Prince and Lama in this transaction, was the behaviour of the people towards us—full of prejudice against the object of our mission, and ever observant of the countenance of their superiors. Even raillery was not spared; the common remarks which we heard on all sides from Priests and people were these: "We have Nomm (religious instruction) enough of our own, such as our fathers had before us, and want no new teaching. Our own Nomm is good, for it was taught and given by the Gods themselves, and therefore we must not forsake it. The new Nomm comes from Russia, and the Germans are the ministers of it; if we attend to this new Nomm, our fine old Nomm, and all the splendid religious ceremo-

nies which belong to it, will fall to the ground; our priesthood (our support with the Gods) will come to an end; and we shall lose our freedom and independence. If we receive these books, they will send us Popes from Russia, to teach us more, and to try to lead us from our old faith. They will not let us be herdsmen any longer, we shall be forced to drive the plough, like the Russians; then we shall be made to pay taxes, and be enrolled for soldiers, like the Cossacks; in a word, we shall be ruined if we suffer ourselves to be taken in by the seemingly innocent proposition of the Germans."

No wonder we were pursued with insult and raillery, if our undertaking was considered in this point of view. Here also, as in the other hordes, which we afterwards visited, the most absurd reports were propagated about us; for instance, that every one who received a book, was also to receive a sum of money, and that we then registered the name of the recipient, by which he was bound to become a Russian (that is a Christian,) &c.

The Kurdu, or prayer-machine, which I have mentioned more than once, is peculiar to the Bud-

dhaists. It consists of hollow wooden cylinders, of different sizes, filled with Tangud writings. The cylinders are painted with red stripes, and adorned with handsome gilt letters, in the Sanscrit character, commonly containing the formula Om-ma-in-bad-mæ-chum; each of these is fixed upon an iron axis, which goes through a square frame; this frame is capable of being shut up flat, and is formed upon a small scale, much like a weaver's sheering machine. Where the lower parts of the frame cross, there is a hole, in which the axis of the cylinder turns; by means of a string which is attached to a crank in the spindle, the machine can be kept in motion, so that the cylinder turns in the frame like a grindstone (only upright) upon its axis. Before the fire at Sarepta, we had two large Kurdus of this kind, with Tangud writings of all sorts, rolled one upon another round the spindle, in the inside of the cylinder, to the length altogether of some hundred feet. These prayer mills perform a much more important office than a rosary, which only serves to assist the person who prays. The Moguls believe, that it is meritorious respectfully to set in motion (whether by the wind or otherwise,) such writings as contain

prayers and other religious documents, that the noise of these scraps of theology may reach to the Gods, and bring down their blessing. As these prayer-machines usually contain the Tangud formula, which is serviceable to all living creatures, (repeated it may be ten thousand times, so that there is a multiplication of power like that in the English machines, equivalent to the labour of so many individuals,)—as prayer can, in this manner, be carried on like a wholesale manufactory, it is not very surprising that prayer-mills are so commonly to be found in the houses of the Moguls. An ingenious contrivance this, for storming Heaven with the least possible trouble.

This evening, when we returned to our tent, we found a sheep tethered near it, which the Prince had sent during our visit.

On the 20th of June, Brother Schill was again very unwell; the symptoms of the day but one before, returning with redoubled violence. This prevented us from applying for the Prince's answer, whether he chose to keep the books and give us the introductory letter, which he had promised he would this day determine.

Our Tartars, who went about for the first time

to look at the camp, chanced to go by the hut of the Lama, and were compelled to enter; he questioned them about our mission, and the Gellongs on this occasion declared loudly, that our object was no other than to bring the Calmucs more into subjection to the Russians. Some of the Gellongs, who had learnt that one of us was sick, inquired mysteriously and with minuteness about the symptoms, giving it to be understood, that this illness was the effect of their own incantations. Some of the medical Gellongs afterwards paid us a visit, and showed great curiosity about Brother Schill's illness; but not meeting with much encouragement from us, they begged some of our medicine, and we gave them what we could spare.

A Calmuc of the name of Dadwa, a neighbour of ours, rode out in the morning with his gun, in pursuit of the antelopes; none of which came in his way. On his return he met a she-wolf, to which he gave chase with great zeal, and pursued her for thirty versts on his fleet steed. Wearied out at last, she lay down, and the Calmuc succeeded in shooting her, first through the right ear, and again through the breast. This expedition

took place at mid-day, when the thermometer was thirty degrees in the shade, and thirty-eight in the sun. When the Calmuc was blamed on his return, for risking his good horse in the heat, for the sake of killing a wolf, he replied, that he took the chance of the consequences very willingly, because it would bring him into notice.

At some distance from our tent, we found the corpse of a Calmuc woman, laid out in a fur dress, and covered with coarse felt. Wooden drinking vessels, and other unimportant utensils, were laid by her side. This is the common way of disposing of the dead, amongst the Calmucs of inferior rank, so that the bodies are usually devoured by dogs and vultures. A few days after this time, the bones of this corpse were pretty well stript of flesh, and scattered about here and there on the steppes. The dogs who had partaken, however, paid dear for the feast, for being betrayed on their return by the smell, they were chased from home, as unclean, by their masters. The custom is different as respects the Princes and Lamas. Their bodies are burnt with great solemnity, and the ashes mixed with mortar, are

employed in building a chapel or tomb, on the site of the funeral pile.

Towards evening, the Prince was visited by his brother-in-law, the Saissang Onker. He is the first of the three rulers of the Bagan Zocher tribe, to whom we were to deliver a letter from the Minister, when we arrived at their horde. The Prince sent to us at eleven o'clock at night, to beg a little brandy, that he might treat his guest with suitable distinction; the said brandy was entirely spoilt, but it would still pass for European brandy.

On the 21st of June, Brother Schill's illness continued, and during the night, which I passed in watching him, he was almost incessantly delirious. Destitute as we were of medical assistance, it now behoved me to inquire, with all diligence, into the nature of the complaint; from uncertainty about which, I had hitherto not dared to apply any remedy. I was now convinced that the disease was an inflammatory fever, the consequence, in all probability, of the excessive heat; and I applied remedies which had the desired effect.

Previous experience had taught us, that we should require another horse (at least) for the prosecution of our journey, as our own had been much enfeebled by want of food, and by the hardships they had encountered, and there was no probability of our lightening their load, by any great distribution of books in this horde. We therefore took advantage of an opportunity which presented itself, to provide ourselves with another horse, so that we had now seven. Towards evening an Astracan Tartar, and later still a Russian from Zaritzin, with some trifling articles of commerce, arrived, and took up their quarters close by our tent.

On the 22d of June, we united in spirit, with the whole Eastern church, then engaged in celebrating Whitsuntide, and we invoked the spirit of power, with all fervour, that a joyous Whitsuntide might hereafter appear for the heathen tribes amongst whom we were then residing, filling them with the spirit and with salvation which is from above. Head-quarters were this day changed a verst farther westward, and the Prince gave us our choice, whether we would accompany him or stay where we were. As Brother Schill was still

weak, and a removal would occasion him much inconvenience, we determined to remain. In the evening, when the moon was about twenty degrees high, there was a storm at some distance from us, and beneath the moon, presenting a curious spectacle. Though the priests were now a verst from us, we heard their clamorous prayers in anticipation of the next day's fast, which was appointed for the 15th, according to the Calmuc method of reckoning.

On the morning of the 23d, a party of cranes (the two parents and two young ones,) paraded in front of our tent, searching for food: their principal subsistence on these barren steppes is a sort of lizard, which is very abundant. Our old Tartar André, when he saw them, took the gun and gave chace. At first they escaped very swiftly, but the old Tartar continued to pursue them, and the young ones did not get on very fast; at last the father turned round upon the enemy, hissing and flapping with its wings, till it was laid on the ground by a well directed shot. The rest of the family in the mean time escaped. Many of the Calmucs who had witnessed this scene from a distance, were greatly shocked, that

our Tartar should have shot at creatures whom ancient superstition had ever held sacred. They quoted an old proverbial saying, that the man who had killed a crane, would be punished by fate, and the Astracan pedlar, who had arrived the day but one before, (to conciliate goodwill and promote the sale of his wares,) took their side of the question, reproached the Tartar on his return, and embittered his triumph. The Calmucs prophesied heavy mishaps, sooner or later, in requital for this deed; and the Tartar maintained that Mahomet also forbad the destruction of cranes. Our André, who had been baptised into the Greek Church in his youth, but had a leaning towards Mahometanism, (of which he knew about as much as he did of Christianity,) endeavoured to justify himself by the practice of his countrymen the Casan Tartars. When his antagonists had withdrawn, he was seized with a superstitious fear, that these people might chance to be right. I showed him the absurdity of the notion, and explained, that in the sight of God all food is lawful and clean, if it be partaken of with a grateful mind. I enforced this by the 15th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, where Jesus declares that a man is not

defiled by food, but by the deeds of his own wicked heart. The old Tartar was now happy again, and he praised the beauty of the Gospel, of which he and our other Tartar most likely heard, at this time, the first specimen. We dined upon the crane with all possible satisfaction, stuffed his soft feathers into the cushion of my saddle, and cleared the others out of the way, that we might give no farther offence. It is curious to find amongst the Calmucs this indefinite traditional veneration for the crane, which resembles the Egyptian superstition about the ibis. Probably this inhabitant of the marshes was esteemed sacred in India as well as in Egypt, for the religious customs of the two nations clearly indicate one common source. Such animals must have been serviceable in both countries, by the destruction of amphibious reptiles, after the retreat of the Nile in one case, and the Ganges in the other, and gratitude might occasion them to be held sacred, and by the Egyptians embalmed. In the dry deserts of the Moguls (where indeed the species is rare,) their use was less obvious, the claim to homage was weaker, and dwindled at last to an uncertain tradition.

In the afternoon, stormy clouds obscured the horizon, and the Calmucs were busily securing their tents with additional bands, in expectation of one of those tempests which rage in these plains, and often overset and damage their huts. We followed their example, but neither storm nor tempest arrived. Although Brother Schill was still very weak, we accepted an invitation from the Prince, on the 24th of June, in eager hope of his announcing at last the result of his deliberation. It was a festal day, and his only thought seemed to be to show us his gaily decked tent; all round the interior, it was hung with flowered silk, and besides the usual pictures of the Gods, a number of others were unrolled. Amongst them was the image of Schag-dschamuni, of Chomschin-boddi-sadoa, and of Amida the illustrious Burchan; also the twelve signs of the Zodiac over the plain of the earth, the latter supported by a tortoise, which being fixed to the bottom of the sea, by an arrow of the Burchan Mansuschari, carries the world. The Prince conversed with us in a most friendly way, and tried our skill in interpreting the mythological pictures, and in reading the Tangud cha-

racters over them. He showed us also a good sized kaleidoscope, presented to him by a Russian merchant; this was broken, but as it needed very little repair, I mended it for him, upon which he, his wife, and daughter, were highly delighted. A well cut piece of white marble, about as long as one's hand, and something like a weaver's shuttle, and a small oblong of marble by its side, attracted my attention. The Prince had inherited them from his ancestors, by whom they had been handed down, from the time of the royal horde (the great horde which had migrated into China in 1770), and he did not know what use to make of them. He thought that these pieces, which appeared to have belonged together, might have been the lock and bolt of a palace of marble, which, as their accounts say, belonged to the Khans. He fancied that in a marble palace, *all* must be marble. Though I could not assign the exact use of these two fragments, I thought it probable, from the beauty of the work, that they descended from the Tartars, and had a Greek origin. That the Greeks had penetrated into those parts, I was convinced by an alabaster slab with a Greek inscription, which was found at Aktubah. This

curiosity perished in the fire at Sarepta, but the inscription is preserved in Hammer's Remains of the East. Business was not brought forward at this visit, and when we tried to allude to the subject, the Prince anticipated us, by proposing, with great apparent cordiality, that we should call upon him for that purpose the next day. Deceived in our expectation, we returned home with fresh hope that we should receive a final answer on the morrow. On our return, I found that the cattle of our Calmuc neighbours, who collected in groups to seek shade from our tent, had played me a trick, whilst I was in attendance on the Prince. By way of amusement, they had twitched through the lattice the right leg of my travelling pantaloons, which were hanging up within, and they had nibbled off a good yard of cloth!

On the 25th of June we set off to Court by times, but the Prince was from home. As he was expected shortly, we visited his wife and the Princess Mingmer in the mean time, and they took counsel of us about needlework. I had already drawn a pattern for embroidery, at Deleck's request, and as I conformed as much as possible to the Calmuc taste, it was approved by the

Princess. She now wanted me to trace patterns on velvet, but I took care not to busy myself too much with this employment, that I might not be engaged in an affair which had nothing to do with our main object. The mutual distrust of the two females, showed itself strikingly on this occasion, (trifling as it might seem;) each hid her work, and the patterns she had obtained, from the other, so that not a glimpse could be had of what she was doing.

The Prince returned after a little while, accompanied by two attendants, and coming from the neighbourhood of the Lama's tent. From his first entrance and salutation, we perceived signs of ill-humour, which he had never shown before, and we guessed, not altogether without foundation, that he had been consulting with the Lama about our affairs, and found him indisposed to our wishes. After he had dismissed a Tartar merchant, who was waiting for money, he remained silent and sulky on his cushion, scribbling all sorts of unmeaning figures upon a bit of paper. We all sat in silence, and nothing interrupted the perfect stillness, except a gentle tapping from two women, one of whom was the royal nurse. They were

sitting on the left of the Prince's cushion or throne, ridding one another of the eggs which a certain insect had laid in their heads, and the operation was carried on with so much eagerness, and so little discretion, that at every stroke which was aimed at the enemy, the head of the suffering party was forced down on one side or other. During our journey, we ourselves, in spite of all possible precaution, had suffered considerable inconvenience from the various species of this troublesome insect, which is as much at home amongst the Calmucs, as if they were its especial inheritance. As it is, on account of the transmigration of souls, a great sin to kill any creature, even these hateful guests are spared as much as possible, and when they are quite unbearable, they are only shaken off. Their ascendency in all the huts is consequently so great, that when we visited the Prince, the Lama, or any of the nobles, we frequently beheld these vermin climb up our clothes, and after every visit paid to us by Calmucs, we had at least thirty new inhabitants quartered upon us. Familiar as they are with this vermin, the Calmucs have the utmost aversion to fleas and bugs, which are uncommon amongst them, and they express

their abhorrence of the latter with as much force as a European would use in testifying his disgust at the personal accompaniments of the Calmuc.

After silence had been preserved for some time on both sides, we reminded the Prince of his promised decision, with respect to our business; upon which he made no reply, but continued to draw figures.

Soon after, a servant brought word that some strangers were arrived on horseback, and this diverted the Prince's attention. These were Derbodian Saissangs, attended by a few plebeian Derbodians. According to the Calmuc custom, they stopped about 100 paces from Erdini's tent; then slowly approached from behind, and after permission obtained, entered from the right side. The leader of them, the Saissang Burre Mangne, advanced within a few steps of the Prince, then took off his cap, knelt down on the right knee, and touched with his right hand the left knee of the Prince, who was sitting cross-legged, and who in return touched with his right hand the Saissang's shoulder. He made a similar obeisance to the Princess, and then withdrew to the right side of the doorway, where he knelt upon one knee,

and sat upon his heel. The other Saissang followed his example, and not a word was spoken on either side. When they had both seated themselves in this way at the door, the Saissangs inquired after the Prince's health, and the Prince after theirs, and Barre Mangne, who had known me at Sarepta, though I did not at first recollect him, saluted me with the friendly address "Mendu Zehwik?" and wondered that I had forgotten him. When all these ceremonies were over, it appeared that the two principal Saissangs were ambassadors from the Derbodian Prince Dschambe, bringing intelligence that the Prince had now a son, and on that account was disposed to make overtures of peace. As they brought no written proposals from Dschambe, they made little impression upon Erdini, who inveighed at some length against the Derbodian robberies; the ambassadors in the mean while not daring to mention the Torgudan robberies in return.

We now took our leave, and the Prince politely apologized, that he had not had time to treat with us about our affairs to-day, and that he could not now have the honour, on account of the embassy which had just arrived: he begged we would come

to him to-morrow, and ask for any provisions of which we stood in need. When we got home, we again found a sheep bound near the tent. The Calmucs in our neighbourhood had been much alarmed by the marauding of the Derbodians, and of other plunderers, who took advantage of the divisions in the hordes, and had advanced almost to head-quarters. We received on this occasion the well meant advice, to take good care of our horses, and we followed it so far as not only to chain them, but to set one of the Tartars to watch them at night.

On the 26th of June we made many attempts to see the Prince; but as his brother-in-law Onker had returned from the horde of Zerren Ubaschi, we were obliged to postpone our visit. The Prince again sent to beg some of our brandy for his guest. We learnt at head-quarters, that the place of encampment was to be changed very soon, and that people were already sent forward to choose a convenient situation.

In the afternoon, the Derbodian embassy paid us a visit: it was their intention to proceed to the horde of Zerren Ubaschi with their commission. Prince Dschambe was then in a valley,

(called the Don Ulahste,) three days' journey to the north-west of us. As we were prevented again on the 27th, from waiting upon the Prince, we visited in the mean time the Lama, and other important members of the court. On this occasion, the Lama informed us that we were delayed so long, because the Prince must first consult with other heads of hordes, how he should behave in this matter: he then inquired whether the books which we brought contained the German or the Russian theology, and why we did not go first to the Tartars to effect their conversion? We replied, that the religion which was set forth in the books we had brought, was the holy Word of God, the foundation of all Christian doctrine, Russian and German, since both these nations acknowledged the Christian faith. With regard to the second query, we answered, that the Gospel had been offered not only to the Tartars, but also to the Turks, Thibetians, Persians, Indians, and Chinese; amongst whom it had been received here and there, because there were in those nations many clever and learned men, who searched the Scriptures, to find out their meaning, and retain that which was good. Many

of the Gellongs, who were desirous of information, visited us, and conversed on scientific subjects, inquiring, amongst other things, what was the scope of the doctrine contained in our books, and whether it differed from their own? As we were forbidden all verbal instruction, we referred them to the books themselves, without entering into any explanation; but they chose to set their conduct by that of their rulers, and durst not receive any books.

As the slow progress of our negotiation left us abundance of time, I employed some of it this afternoon in making an excursion, with our younger Tartar Amur-chan, to the Zaza, or chapel at a few versts' distance, to which I alluded before; and, that I might give no offence, I first obtained leave from the Lama. This chapel was erected to the memory of the late Torgud Prince Sandschi-Ubaschi, father of the Prince Zerren Ubaschi, and his ashes, as the Calmucs informed me, are mixed with the mortar which cements and whitens the building. The foundation of this edifice is of stone, upon which is erected a wooden chapel, with steps up to it. It was about four paces long, and the same in breadth, with a flat

roof, and upon it a kind of tower. A small window on the south side was the sole aperture in the building. In the inside was a shelf with cups and other offerings, an altar, an old wooden writing table, bunches of horse-hair, a few copper coins, and a number of small cones, (called zaza,) which are prepared by the priests as offerings. On the walls were frightful images of the four Macharanza Khans, (or kings of a particular class of spirits, called Macharanza,) who are supposed to inhabit Mount Sommer. The image on the south wall (in which the opening was made,) was blue; that on the wall to the right of it, white; to the left, yellow; opposite to the opening, red. All four had huge round eyes, and hair standing straight upon end. In their hands they had weapons, or musical instruments. The object of these chapels seems to be principally to honour the memory of the Princes or Lamas; but they serve, at the same time, as shrines or temples.

On the 28th of June, our endeavours to see the Prince were again fruitless, as his brother-in-law was still with him, on which account our visit was kept in abeyance. One of our servants this day perceived at a distance a Tartar arba-

We bade him ride up to it immediately, to inquire whether rice, or any other necessaries were to be had from the travelling Tartars. When our André overtook them, the Tartar, who was an elder of his people at Astracan, had suffered his servant to bait the horses, and was sitting by the arba, reading a religious book. When the Mahometans are so employed, it is a rule with them to let nothing interrupt them, happen what may under their eyes; but this Tartar, when he heard André's step, looked up with much curiosity, which André, on his return, commented upon very severely, and declared the Tartar no true Mahometan. In the course of the afternoon, this Tartar elder came to our tent and conversed in a friendly manner, and with considerable intelligence, about different points of religion and ancient history. He told the Calmucs who happened to be present, that they were fools to believe in so many gods, they knew not themselves how many; that the Christians and Mahometans had only one God, whose will had been revealed to them by Moses, Mahomet, and Christ, in the Bible and Koran. These two books, he said, were to be esteemed of equal value in themselves,

and only to be distinguished, as being ordained for two different classes of people. In the evening we enjoyed at last a delightfully refreshing shower, which revived and animated all nature, after the long heat and drought. Pools were immediately formed on the stiff clay soil of the steppes.

While the Calmucs were drawing water at our well, an Ubaschi, (a common Calmuc, who had taken one of those religious vows which consist principally in works of mercy,) sitting idle by the well, spied a frog which was trying in vain to get out of the water. He called to a Calmuc who was drawing water, to take the frog out, which was accordingly done. The Ubaschi was highly delighted at having directed this good work, and began to set forth how the judge of the dead, Erlik Khan, in weighing his merits and sins, would throw into the scale of his deserts this good work, by which he had saved the life of an animal. The other, who had taken the frog out of the well, maintained that *he* was the preserver; and hereupon, they parted in anger.

The small-pox and measles which prevailed in the horde of Prince Zerren Ubaschi, and occasioned the separation from Erdini, continued to

rage dreadfully in that horde, and appeared occasionally in Erdini's. The stupidity, or more properly speaking, the ignorance of the Calmuc physicians, evidently increased the evil; it was their practice to order broth and other heating things, commonly large doses of brandy, which must have cost many patients their lives. These physicians informed us, that they had known large quantities of melted butter taken in this complaint with very good effect. This day a Calmuc died of small-pox, not far from head quarters; the tent was immediately abandoned by his family, (who left every thing just as it stood,) and nobody approached the spot for fear of infection. The Calmucs were anxious that the tent should be burnt, that no stranger might unwittingly enter it.

On the 29th of June, our Tartars received invitations from various quarters, to take to themselves the property of the deceased, and set fire to the tent, and the most inviting description was made of the moveables at the same time. All this failed, however; and then came a Gellong, with a commission from the Prince and Lama, to our Tartars, desiring them to burn the tent, and the dead man within it; he assured them, that

this might be effected without any possible risk, by throwing a few tubs of butter (with which he promised to supply them,) on the top of it, and then setting fire to it, with long poles; and they were to have a silver dollar for their trouble. Our old Tartar, who well knew the Calmucs and their habits, distrusted the proposal, and feared that it was only a trick to get rid of us. He took care to apprise us of his suspicions, and we perceived that it was too delicate a matter for us to consent to, as it was highly probable, that the object in employing our people on this business, (which the Calmucs consider unclean,) was to subject us to a kind of quarantine; at all events, we should have been kept away from the Prince for a long time, under the pretence, that we had had to do with a corpse, and might have been compelled, to their great joy, to leave the horde without accomplishing our purpose. When we visited the Prince in the forenoon, he made the same proposal about our Tartars, and made no reply when we stated our objections; from the smiles of the by-standers, we inferred that our distrust was not without reason.

When the messengers, who had been sent to

survey the ground for an encampment, returned, it was reported that the horde was to be immediately set in motion. We were tired by this time of the everlasting delay, and had neither time nor inclination to accompany the horde any farther; we therefore entreated with earnestness, that the Prince would provide us with the letter of introduction and recommendation which he had promised eleven days ago; we added, that we had now lost nearly a month in his horde, and pressed him to give us a distinct answer, whether he would allow us to distribute books to his people, or not. After a little of his former shuffling, he gave us his word that he would prepare the letter that afternoon, before he broke up his camp. When we went to fetch it, however, it was not ready; he showed us a paper which had been sealed, which he said was a rough draft, but that he must write it out again, which he could not do that day, and therefore we must take one more little journey with him. As a finale, the Prince asked me to prescribe something which would keep his hair from falling off, as he was grieved to find his head growing bald; the Princess requested an antidote against freckles, and a little bracing medicine.

We were also to prescribe for the Lama, for the report of our medical science was widely diffused in the camp. The recovery of Brother Schill, and the cure of a woman who had suffered from a stomach complaint for three years, and been under other medical care without any success, had procured us this celebrity. Indeed, the word Nemesch (a German,) is synonymous with "a physician," amongst the Calmucs, and they seem to think that every German must be a medical man. On this account we were visited by numbers, who asked for physic; but we sent most of them away, and meddled with none but trifling cases, or such as we sufficiently understood. Many Calmucs, old people especially, came with inflamed eyes, which we cured by small quantities of St. Ive's balsam.

When we returned from the Prince's tent, we made ready for our journey, which, as it turned out, was postponed that day on account of a storm. The next day, the 30th of June, we set off, though by the astronomical kalendar, the day was unlucky, which they contrived to get over, by saying that the preparations for the purpose had been made the day before. After

travelling for three hours, in which time we advanced about twelve versts, we reached the Nojori Gellongin Chuduk, (the Prince and Gellong's well) where we encamped. On our journey we passed a swarm of locusts, several versts wide; it extended to our new encampment, and even beyond it. The locust (gryllus migratorius) is from three to four inches in length, and at its full size is longer and narrower than other insects of the same species, the grasshopper for instance, which is known in Germany, and which has a more prominent breast, and shorter wing. The head is round, with short feelers, and like the breast, of a dingy green; the throat is dark brown, its large eyes black, the exterior case of the wing of a dirty yellowish green, with many dark spots, showing the black wings at a little distance; the body and the legs are pale yellow, with black marks on the side of the legs next the body. In their first state, the locusts have very imperfect wings, which do not cover the whole of the body, whereas when they are full grown, they reach much beyond it. Well might the prophet Joel (chapters 1st and 2nd,) refer to the locusts, as the agents of a chastising Providence, for they are a real

scourge to the nation in which they appear, laying waste whole districts in a very short time, by their dreadful rapacity and great numbers. Wherever they settle, they devour not only every thing green, but the stems of the shrubs, and the weeds of the sea: the Calmucs told us that the very felt on their tents was entirely consumed, if they suffered a swarm of these enemies to descend unmolested. As they soon strip the position they have chosen, they are compelled to migrate in search of food, and this usually takes place about dusk. Their long wings enable them to traverse large districts. This species of locust, as well as the gryllus cristatus, which was the food of John the Baptist, and is still eaten in Arabia, is prepared in many different ways by the Oriental nations. In Morocco, they are so highly esteemed that the price of provisions falls when the locusts have entered the neighbourhood. The Calmucs do not use them as food, but we were told that wolves, dogs, antelopes, sheep, and other animals which have fattened upon them, are much sought after. The wolves seldom or never attack the flocks of the Calmucs when the locusts are at hand, because they can satisfy themselves with

these insects. A circumstance which happened some years ago at Sarepta, is sufficient to prove that locusts are excellent food: the hogs in that neighbourhood became unusually fat, by having been fed for some time entirely upon dead locusts which had been drowned in the Volga, and thrown in heaps on the shore.

The swarm of locusts which I have just mentioned was so numerous, that the whole ground was covered with them, and looked as if it had been sprinkled with pea-shells. It was curious to observe that their heads were all turned to the west, and that in this direction they were devouring every blade of grass with frightful assiduity. In the sunshine their wings appeared like silver or glass, and reflected a tremulous light. Where we passed through their ranks, they rose in thick clouds, with a loud rattling caused by the flapping of their wings against one another, and continued whizzing in irregular groups through the space around us, like snow when it falls in large flakes. The path which they left for us, was about twenty paces wider than our line of march, and it was immediately filled up at the same distance behind us, as if by falling clouds. They were so nimble,

that we found it difficult to catch any of them, particularly as our journey took place in the heat of the day, and in the sunshine, when they are always most active. The dogs were highly delighted with chasing these swarms, and snapping as many as they could out of the air, which they accomplished with more facility in the cool of the evening. Many of these locusts were in their first state, when they are of a dark orange colour, others had nearly reached their full growth. After a few days, they had almost all completed their change, and they were able to rise like their comrades into the air, to seek out new districts. Once when I went in search of insects at this place, (which I always did secretly, that I might give no offence to the Calmucs, who consider it a great sin to kill any creature, and more particularly an insect,) I was observed by some Calmucs, whose curiosity was excited by my stooping so often. They came slowly up to me to see what I was looking for. I commonly satisfied all inquiries, with the pretext that I was looking for medicinal herbs, which they thought the more probable, as they had a high opinion of our science in the art of healing. On this occasion, I took advantage of

the transformation of the locusts, as they happened to be in sight. This spectacle they had never before remarked, and it occasioned the greatest astonishment. Such locusts as were ready for their transformation, were to be seen in numbers, climbing up the stalk of a plant, and then holding themselves in an inverted position with their long legs. After a little while, the creature begins to rock itself backwards and forwards, resting at intervals as if almost exhausted, then shaking itself again with increasing violence, until the breast and head break through, the old covering by continued effort is thrown off, and the insect appears in its perfect state. The wings now grow to their full size, and appear to strengthen before the eyes of the observer, and acquire by exposure to the air their natural colour and splendour. While the boys were busied in seeking more blades of grass with locusts upon them, the spectators unceasingly repeated their exclamations of Dalai Lama! Dalai Lama! Chair Khan! Chair Khan! or Kuhrku! Kuhrku! at the sight of a process of nature which had been unknown to them, though it had passed under their eyes.

The steppes were more barren here than ever,

on account of the visitation of the above-mentioned guests, and our horses were forced to content themselves with what had escaped the voracity of the locusts. We watered them from a neighbouring puddle of rain-water, from which we also took what we required for our own use.

On the 1st of July, we at last proceeded so far with our business, that we saw, on a visit to the Prince, the sketch of an introductory letter. It was full of corrections, had been sealed, and most probably made the round of a number of Princes, whose additions and erasures had brought it into its present condition. After the Prince had received the Lama's approbation of the letter, as it then stood, it was to be copied for us; this was to be done the same day, but the Prince observed that the letter should be signed and sealed the day after, because the astrologer had said this day was unlucky for the purpose. Our request that we might have a guide to Prince Otschir, (though we had often discussed the subject before) was not immediately granted: the Prince took a day to consider whether he should comply with our wish. Now that our departure was drawing near, the Prince and Princess wanted

to be informed more at length of the motives which occasioned our journey. They cross-examined us on the subject,—whether we expected to be promoted to some dignity, as a reward for our trouble,—whether we should be paid in gold, and how much,—who paid the expenses of our journey, &c. We replied, that we were travelling in the service of the Russian Bible Society, which would defray our expenses,—that we expected neither rank nor gold, but had come to them solely in the hope, that the word of God might be made known to them. The Princess replied, "If this be the true state of the case, you must have no servants, but do every thing for yourself, and live very poorly, for that is the only way to make your employment acceptable; it was thus that Boddih-Sadok (the Holy and Redeemer) denied himself to save the six classes of beings." She then related a story, well known amongst the Calmucs, about Uschandri Khan, who became more and more holy, by severe trials. We replied that we did not aspire after any merit or worthiness of our own, for, according to the Christian doctrine, no man can be saved by his own righteousness, but by grace, which is through Jesus Christ, our only

Boddih-Sadok, or Redeemer, and which is imparted to all who believe with their whole heart upon him; that we came to them, in order that other men might also enjoy the blessedness which our Saviour had purchased for us.

The air was much cooled after the storm, so that we had a cold night, and the thermometer in the morning (the 2d of July) was only ten degrees above zero. We were to have marched yet farther, but as it was a stormy rainy day, the camp remained where it was. When we waited upon the Prince in the afternoon, the letter was ready, and as soon as the Princess Dellek had taken a copy of it, the Prince sealed the letter and delivered it to us. This document, after all, was far from being what we wished. The Prince left it to the discretion of his subjects, to receive books from us or not, as they should think best: he informed them that he had taken two copies for himself and for the priests, to honour our mission, to gratify his own curiosity, and to be able to show them to his people: he then commands that all men should receive us well, and suffer us to pursue our journey without molestation. Though

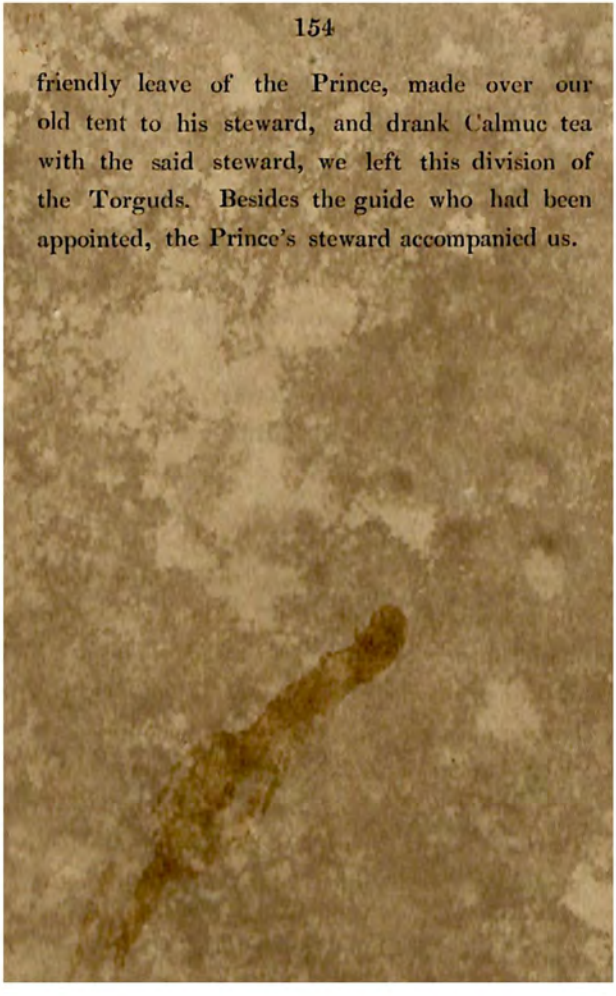
we were aware that this letter would make little impression upon the Calmucs, we had no power of getting it altered, and we began to think of leaving a horde where we had been kept almost a month in idleness, and had only disposed of two books. Not one of Erdeni's subjects, whom we afterwards found scattered far and wide, ever took a single book from us.

On this and the following day, we had much parley with the Prince, about a guide to one of the neighbouring Princes, to whom we were addressed, and at last, on the 3d of July, we were allowed a guide to Prince Satter, whose horde was not far off.

The cold stormy weather, with occasional showers of rain, continued. The Calmucs accounted for it, by saying that Prince Otschir, who was building a new zara, had given twelve horses to a skilful astrological Gellong of the Erketen horde, to make cool weather for the Gellongs during their labour, for these sacred buildings must be erected solely by Gellongs. Such follies as these the Calmucs believe in good earnest.

On the 4th of July, after we had taken a

friendly leave of the Prince, made over our old tent to his steward, and drank Calmuc tea with the said steward, we left this division of the Torguds. Besides the guide who had been appointed, the Prince's steward accompanied us.



CHAPTER VII.

VISIT TO THE THREE BROTHERS, SETTER, DSCHIRGAL, AND OTSCHIR; FROM THE 4TH TO THE 13TH OF JULY.

We had travelled only a few versts, when we were told by our attendants, that Setter was in the immediate neighbourhood, (without any of his horde) having come for medical advice, from one of Erdeni's Gellongs, which old Gellong, with a few servants, were said to compose his whole retinue. Setter is a Torgud prince, who in common with his two elder brothers, Dschirgal and Otschir, inherited from his father, Zebek Ubaschi, a horde of four hundred tents. We had a letter from the minister to these three brothers, whose names were all specified in the address, and as Setter was the nearest, we proposed to present it

to him first, though he happened to be the youngest. After many preliminaries with the old Gellong, who sought to delay us, we were admitted into the Prince's presence, and when we had saluted him, we offered, together with a few trifling presents, the minister's letter, and two volumes of the books we had brought. We now discovered that he was idiotic, for he stole Brother Schill's tobacco-box and hid it under his cushion, and one of the servants, to whom we applied, wrested it from him by main force. We got it back again, and with it the unopened letter; but we had already experienced on this occasion, somewhat to our inconvenience, the habits of concealment which, as I before mentioned, the Calmucs preserve in their dealings with strangers. It was not till we saw it with our own eyes, that we were aware that Setter was idiotic, (he had been so from childhood,) and that the second brother (Otschir) ruled in his stead. After much coaxing and pressing, in which Erdeni's steward supported us faithfully, we persuaded the old Gellong to furnish us with a guide to the next Prince, Dschirgal, Setter's eldest brother.

On the 5th of July, at eight in the morning,

we set off with our guide, a Gezull of Erdeni's horde, who had been hired by the Gellong; the old Gellong himself, and the other attendants of the Prince, making us at parting innumerable apologies for the conduct of their master, and begging us to remember him with compassion. They gave us moreover a flask of tschigan for our journey, which we unfortunately broke very soon after we received it. Not far from where we set out, we found on the flat steppes the nest of a black eagle, (falco aquila) in which were two well-fledged young ones, about the size of a common barn-door fowl. When I approached, they laid their heads almost on the ground, extending their necks at the same time and hissing, but when I lifted them up into the air, they made no resistance. The nest was a bed of scraps of fur, and morsels of felt, bordered all round with large bones. Further on, we came to a sand hill, many versts in circumference, in which there was a hollow, perhaps a verst in diameter, containing a number of wells, each about two fathoms deep, known by the common appellation of Nirma Arschinlehuduk, the governor and teacher's wells. It is remarkable, that all the wells on the inner

steppes are to be found in these sandy hollows, amidst the clayey soil of the surrounding steppes, and they may always be known from a distance by the high rim or bank. They are pretty numerous, and have the appearance of obsolete craters, or as if they had broken out through the ground from some frightful abyss.

After this, we passed in a westerly direction, by the Ulahstihn Chuduk, or willow wells, where we had encamped not long ago, and we halted soon after in a green valley to dine. Our afternoon journey, in a south westerly direction, was through a great swarm of locusts, and our Gezull rode as close to me as possible, following close in the track of my horse, that he might not run the risk of trampling them down. As he was not well acquainted with the country, and no Calmuc came within sight, he occasionally rode on before us, to the old grave hills which are here and there to be met with, and from this elevation he spied out the route; sometimes standing on his saddle to make a more extensive survey. At sunset we found a few pools of rain water, to the south of Challarihn Burra Chuduk, (where we had also encamped with Erdeni,) and by these pools we took up our

abode for the night. I there killed a scorpion-spider, as they are called (phalangium araneoides); at dusk these creatures come out to a light, and are very much feared, as their bite is worse than that of the tarantula. On the 6th of June we recommenced our journey, at half past five in the morning, and halted at noon at some water pits, for in rainy years there is water on these steppes the whole summer through. Here we met some Calmucs, the first we had seen during our two days' journey; they shared our dinner of rice and dried flesh, and told us that Dschirgal's horde was not far off. Whilst we halted at this place, we made use of the pool, which in some parts was half a yard deep, as a bath, and also for washing our clothes. In the afternoon we had an unsuccessful chase after small bustards (otis tetrase) and steppe-birds, (glariola austriaca) and we again found the nest of a black eagle, with two well grown eaglets. At six o'clock in the afternoon we arrived at Itelgin Chuduk, hawk's well, where Prince Dschirgal was then residing.

When we had changed our dress, we proceeded immediately to the Prince's tent, which was surrounded with many others, but unaccompanied by

a Churul; we announced ourselves, and were immediately admitted. Dschirgal, a man about thirty years of age, thin, with only one eye, and in very dirty apparel, was lounging on a couch which was equally dirty, in a tent which had nothing princely about it. He took the introductory letter, which we presented, carelessly, (contemptuously even,) and after asking a few questions in a short boorish manner, he sent us back to our carriages. It was evident that we were to deal with a boor, though of princely rank, and we had very soon further proof of this fact. Just as we had eaten our moderate supper, by the side of our carriage, and were ready to betake ourselves to repose, the Prince sent word by one of his servants that he was coming to pay us a visit. He arrived immediately, attended by two little pages. He called for tea, and first civilly and then with threats, desired to have brandy with it. He had already learnt from our attendants how much we had brought with us, and he drank, either separately or with his tea, fifteen glasses of brandy, which was the whole of our stock, except a small remainder which he carried off with him. He demanded abundance

of sugar with it, and the gingerbread which we had designed for future presents. We could refuse him nothing, for our stores had been already announced, and we felt ourselves entirely in the power of an uncivilized (and as we clearly saw, blood-thirsty) robber, who perhaps had only to speak the word, and his subjects (a suspicious-looking rabble in Russian, Armenian, and Circassian dresses, whom we had already seen in considerable numbers about us,) would have fallen upon us without mercy or delay. Neither here, nor in the other hordes which we afterwards visited, were there any Russian Pristaws, to whom we could apply for protection. The Prince's love of plunder was now uppermost, and he desired to see our horses, but we succeeded in turning him from his purpose, by telling him that they were the property of the Government, which we had no power to dispose of. Upon this, he asked to see our daggers, (which we had left in the coach) set himself by the fire, and tried them in various ways, particularly by letting them fall, together with his own, into the ground, after which he pronounced that mine (a very fine one, which I had bought at Astracan four years ago from a Persian,)

was the best of them all. He took possession of it immediately with the words, "We will change," and threw his own (which was a miserably poor one) to me. Brother Schill lost his tobacco-pipe on this occasion, and would have lost his good coat, if Dschirgal, who had tried it on during the visit, had not luckily forgotten it when he was going away. As this was the process, I cleared away as well as I could, every thing that lay near us, whilst I sat by the side of the Prince. The younger of our Tartars, Amur-Khan, was asleep in the coach before Dschirgal arrived; old André was busy in looking after the fire and making the tea. At last, when Dschirgal was intoxicated with the brandy he had taken, he insisted that André should dance and sing to him. André declared that he could not do either. The Prince then roared to Amur-Khan, who came out bewildered and half asleep, and declared in like manner that *he* could not sing; and then the two pages who were kneeling before their master, watching every wink, and catching occasional morsels of gingerbread which he threw them, were ordered to sing. They struck up in concert a Calmuc song, in honour of a certain Schushing Saloh, a bandit, who was at

last taken by the Russians, and banished to Siberia. When Dschirgal thought proper to leave us, (at one o'clock) he desired that our André should take care of him home, and without the smallest provocation, he tried to stab him on the road. At the first attempt, André caught hold of his arm, and at the second he ran away and made his escape. We were afterwards informed by a credible eye-witness, that Dschirgal is every now and then possessed with this murderous propensity, and that this very spring, he had maimed a young man, hand and foot, on a similar occasion. No merchant now comes to the neighbourhood, and even his countrymen keep at a distance, for he plunders and ill-treats all who come in his way. Formerly he governed the whole horde, which the three brothers had inherited from their father, but as his violence and greediness revolted his subjects, the second brother, Otschir, supported by the high Pristaw, assumed the command. Thus Dschirgal (as well as his brother Setter,) lost his share of the horde, and he was at this time surrounded only by a motley rabble whom he had gathered together. All this was entirely unknown to us, till we found it out

by unpleasant experience. We were now in haste to make our escape, and as soon as Dschirgal had slept off the effects of his brandy, on the following morning, the 7th of July, we went to him, to ask for the letter which we had presented to him, without which we should have had no introduction to Otschir. The letter we obtained without any difficulty, but we neither saw nor heard any more of the things he had stolen. We had hardly got back to our coach, when the Prince came on horseback, and demanded punch tea, which we could not give him, as he had taken all our brandy the evening before. He dictated to one of his attendants a few unconnected lines, saying that he agreed in opinion with Erdeni, and had also received two of our books; and he bade us come and fetch this writing the following day, when it would be sealed and ready. He desired two Gezulls who were present, to take the books, upon which they both slipt out of the way in silence. When he was about to ride off, he told Brother Schill to follow him, and at some little distance, he again pressed him to give him his coat, offering a horse in return, (which it would not have been easy to get, for the Prince had

none in his possession except the identical beast upon which he was riding ;) at last, under various pretences, the demand was eluded, and in the afternoon he sent us a sheep and some tschigan.

Till this time we had seen no locusts in the valley ; but at sunset they broke in from the south, in a terrific swarm, scarcely more than two yards from the ground ; they moved towards the north, in a column more than a verst in width, and which was an hour or more in passing. As this remarkable phenomenon took place not far from our coach, I got into the midst of them, to observe them more closely, and they formed a kind of impenetrable arch just over my head. The noise which they made in flying, resembled that of a loud waterfall at a distance, and was accompanied by a slight rattling. We were twice disturbed in the night by Dschirgal's pages, once for salmon, and once for caviar, with neither of which it was in our power to accommodate him. The next morning, the 8th of July, we waited upon the Prince in our travelling dresses, got him to seal his letter, and obtained a guide for our journey. With this guide we set off at eleven o'clock, heartily glad to escape from the neighbourhood

and to pursue our journey with our letter, to the third of the trio. At noon we reached a number of huts belonging to a rich Gellong, one of Dschirgal's ci-devant subjects, to whom he had referred us for a guide, for the latter part of the route. Hard work we had to persuade the Gellong, but he consented at last, and sent a relation of his, an intelligent Gezull, with whom we were entirely satisfied. The Gellong in the mean time sent word to Dschirgal, by our first guide, that he wished him the small-pox for the trick he had played him. Our attempt to distribute books here, was entirely abortive; they all excused themselves, by saying that the prayer Om-ma-ne-bad-mæ-chum was sufficient for them. At three o'clock, we proceeded with our guide, in a westerly course, towards the blue Sarpa hills, which we could see in the distance. After a few hours we came to a Zaza in honour of a Torgud Lama. Our Gezull stopped some time, respectfully, at a distance, then approached on foot, and bowed three times at the entrance with his head down to his cap, (which he had thrown on the ground,) paced three times round the Zaza, took off his slippers, and crept in at the

aperture. He begged me to stay by him, while he lighted a lamp in honour of the idols. I complied very willingly, and was pleased with the well-meaning piety of the youth. This Zaza was of wood, and contained the same furniture as the one I had seen at Ulahstin-Chuduk, except that there was a large lanthorn with holes in it, to prevent the danger that might ensue from a lamp. Close by this Zaza, the new one is to be built, for which Otschir lately purchased cool weather at the price of twelve horses. The materials, wood, mortar, and fort, loads of bricks, &c., were lying in readiness. Soon after, we passed an irregular hollow, overgrown with sedges; this was the dry bed of the Sarpa. At sunset we rode through thick swarms of locusts, which were migrating to the north; and at nine o'clock in the evening, we came to a well-inhabited spot, where we took up our quarters for the night by the side of a kind of ditch. This is the continuation of a large channel in the mountains, called Kugultu the black-thorny, by the side of which we had travelled. The people here received us in a very inhospitable manner, and refused to let us have the small quantity of milk which we wanted for our coffee the next morning;

but our André at last got by threats, what they had denied to our entreaties. The next day, the 9th of July, we set off at six o'clock in the morning, and when we had got a hundred paces from our last night's abode, a Calmuc came running to us from a little group of huts, and begged us to cure him of the bite of a black spider, the bebussun chara, (black widow) or, as it is sometimes called, tobihn summun, (the canon.) He had been bitten on the naked back in his bed, about half an hour before, by one of these creatures, which he had killed and preserved. This spider is of moderate size, quite black, and rather shining, with a thick body and slender legs, and very little covered with hair. The man's back was swollen to a considerable distance round the part, and water trickled out of his mouth. I advised him to have the wound seared with a hot iron, but he had recourse to his superstition in preference, and begged from our Gezull a bit of deer's horn which he had in his rosary. Near the same huts, we saw a camel with the body exceedingly swollen by the bite of one of these poisonous spiders. Not long after, we saw a number of camels which had been bitten, in the same

state, and nobody seemed to apply any remedy. I was afterwards told by a Gellong, that they administer a great deal of brandy to a patient who has been bitten, and then cover him with furs till he perspires, and so works off the poison, but that this treatment is not always successful. Of the animal creation, the camels seem to suffer most from these spiders, because they are most addicted to lying on the ground. What became of the young man who applied to us, we never heard, as we could not stay to watch the progress of his disease. When we left him, he complained of shivering in his limbs, and of a feverish heat, and he was looking out for a Calmuc physician. Camels which have been bitten seldom recover. At eight o'clock we reached the Sarpa hills, having followed the course of the Kugultu channel. Here we found a large circle of huts, belonging to the ecclesiastics of the horde of Zerren Ubaschi, with their high-priest Bakschi-Sahma. They received us kindly, and we distributed a few books to them. Sahma appeared to be a free-thinking and well-informed man, esteeming all religions alike, and despising none. Amongst his numerous train of inferior priests, we found

more openness and straight-fowardness than we had met with before, and we had many interesting conversations on religious subjects with the Bakschi (or teacher.) On such occasions, we had more than a hundred priests as audience, some of them in the hut itself, others on the outside, with their ears close to the lattice. As the Bakschi, with all his learning, could hardly read the Mogul character, he sent for a Gellong of the name of Zurum, who made his appearance immediately, and read some parts of our books to the Bakschi. This Zurum belonged to the Erkedan horde, and came to Bakschi-Sahma, to perfect himself in the highest branches of Calmuc ecclesiastical knowledge. He is said to be, in all respects, a clever man, and to have staid some time at Astracan to inquire into the Christian religion. We found to our great surprise, that he was well acquainted with the Gospels, and that he knew the number of chapters by heart.

The guide we had brought with us, was here exchanged for another Gezull, with whom Sahma supplied us. As more than a hundred horses belonging to the Churul had been stolen, and there was only one left, a remarkably large ches-

nut, which was holy to the Gods, it was matter of necessity that our guide (who was a Gezull of princely blood) should ride upon this sacred animal. We had not proceeded far, before a Gellong, mounted on the horse of our last guide, came after us at full gallop. It was Zurum, who had obtained the Bakschi's permission to ask for some of our books. He had heard of the Brethren in the Coschudan horde, and of the Calmucs who had accompanied them to Sarepta, and this inclined him to seek Brother Schill's friendship. His manner when he asked for the books, was particularly confiding and friendly. He squeezed Brother Schill's hand, and besought him to be his friend; he then begged to write his own name and tribe on our papers, and to obtain Brother Schill's address in return. He seemed to have something more on his mind, which the presence of the Gezull prevented him from expressing, but he requested that he might correspond with Brother Schill on many important subjects, by means of the Russian itinerant merchants, which was willingly granted. He took leave of us, with every appearance of reluctance, after he had accompanied us some way on our road. Our

guide, who had been all eye and ear during the interview, praised the uncommon studiousness and great talents of this Gellong, as soon as he had left us. This was the first cheering spark of light, amidst the thick darkness of heathenism, that we had found on our journey, and it united our hearts in silent praise and thanksgiving, as well as in affection towards the young priest. With full assurance of faith, we applied the text for the day of our departure from Sarepta, to this event; ("They shall be taught of God,") and assuredly it was by no human agency, that the attention of this man had been directed to the contents of the Scriptures. Our route now lay along a high ridge of hills bordering the Kugultu channel, which we kept on our right, (in many parts a verst broad, and still more in depth) and on our left we had very frequently considerable arms of other deep beds or channels. This ridge of hills shows signs of former inhabitants, (probably of Tartar origin) by the remains of round cisterns or reservoirs which had been banked with stiff clay, to preserve the rain water. In some places the ditches which were to convey the water to the reservoir, were still open, and many of them con-

tinued to hold water, though nobody had taken any trouble about them for three centuries, unless by chance a wandering Calmuc. These cisterns were numerous enough on this ridge, and we found them here and there on our subsequent journey. Those which contained no water, were overgrown with luxuriant grass and herbs. All these reservoirs, as well as the numerous wells, some in ruins and some still of use, bear witness to the industry of the former inhabitants of this country, and to the negligence of its present possessors.

We dined with a rich Calmuc, called Olsohta (the fortunate.) Here also, as we learnt from our host, robbery was so common, that he thought it necessary to have his numerous herds guarded, night and day, by armed men. Olsohta himself only escaped by the fleetness of his horse, from a band who pursued him, as he was returning, a short time ago, with his tschigan tubs, from Prince Otschir's camp. When we continued our journey, at five o'clock, this man accompanied us himself as a guide, having first mustered his herds, which were scattered about in the valleys. He had been told that some Cossacks, who were in the service of

the High Pristaw, were to pass by his dwelling, and as these gentlemen always take the liberty of catching fresh horses, and the best they can find, he took the requisite precautions, to which we were witness. He rode without delay to the different heights, and gave a sign to those who were in the valleys and channels between them, upon which the ridge was immediately covered with troops of horses, who swept over them like a cloud, and were soon hidden (probably to the number of more than a thousand) in some deep cleft or ravine.

After changing our guide several times, we took up our quarters for the night, at nine o'clock in the evening, in the neighbourhood of some huts which were only a few verst's from the commencement of the Kugultu. On the 10th of June, after travelling for two hours, early in the morning we reached the head-quarters of Prince Otschir. The number of the ecclesiastical huts in this camp, was considerably greater than in that of Erdeni and Zerren Ubasehi; here also there was a bazaar or market, at which Armenians, Tartars and Russians, supplied the Calmucs with such goods as they were inclined to purchase, chiefly

materials for clothing, &c. We waited upon the Prince in the forenoon, and presented him with such matters as we had offered to the other Princes whom we had visited. His court resembled that of Erdeni; except that his wife had a separate tent, whereas Erdeni and *his* wife lived in the same. In his behaviour to us, Otschir showed himself a worthy member of the illustrious trio of the Torgud princely brotherhood. He did not rob us, while we staid at his camp, it is true, but this was the only reason we had for preferring him to his brothers. He received the Minister's letter with still greater contempt. When he had glanced his eye carelessly over it, as he lay on his couch, he suffered it to drop on the ground by his side, and we afterwards saw it lying like any other piece of waste paper, in the rubbish. When we had explained to him the object of our journey, he said it should be made known in his horde, that we had books to distribute; but we had afterwards every reason to suppose that this had never been done. As we concluded from his answer that we should have to reside some time in his camp, we besought very humbly that he would lend us a tent during our stay. This he refused

haughtily and in very few words, but he said we might stay a month or more if we liked, for he should not trouble himself about the matter. He did not even send us a sheep or tschigan, in return for our presents, but continually asked for more, without making the slightest acknowledgment.

In the evening of this very day, he sent us word by one of his servants, that he had acquainted his subjects with the object of our visit, (which in so short a space of time was only possible with regard to those of his subjects who happened to be encamped at this particular spot,) and that none of them wished for our books. On the 11th of July the Calmucs celebrated a festival, but on what occasion, or in whose honour, we could not learn. Some said it was in honour of the descent of the Buddh or Burchan Schagdscamuni. The Churuls were adorned with all the pomp they could afford, and the shrill accompaniment to the Tangud litany, resounded from them almost incessantly. We visited this day, at the Churul huts, the Vice-Lama, (the Lama himself was very infirm) and many of the chief Gellongs. The principal Churul was adorned with three-and-thirty large pictures of idols, which were that day

unrolled, and on the altar stood two wooden shrines, containing gilt metal images. These were sitting in the Asiatic manner, and might be a foot and a half in height. The workmanship was admirable, which made me very sceptical as to their being the productions of the Calmucs who live on the spot, which was asserted. One was the image of Schagdschamani, and the other of Madaira, as we could perceive by the manner in which they were represented. Near the altar sat a Gellong, who was reading out of an immense Torgud book, whilst the rest of the priests, in their festal robes, (many of them of scarlet cloth,) were gaily plying a large tub of Tschigan, which was placed in the middle of the temple. The Vice-Lama informed us that they wanted no new "Nomen," (religious instruction;) that all the priests were well content with their own; and that they had more to learn of it, so that they could not give heed to new doctrines: they told us, that they were always mindful of the Emperor in their prayers, and that they prayed for the welfare of the community at large. We replied, that we were not come to force our books upon any one, but to distribute them to those who wished to receive them. Before the

door of the Vice-Lama's tent, and also in front of the Churulls, large banners were waving, inscribed with the formula Om-ma-ni-bad-me-chum, many times repeated: before the Vice-Lama's tent there was also a large Kurdu, (prayer-machine,) set in motion like a horizontal mill, by four large spoon-shaped sails, turned by the wind.

Here, more than any where else, we heard of robberies and murders committed in the neighbourhood against Calmucs, and travelling Russians: this place is on the boundary of the Torguds and Derbodians, which, in some degree, accounts for the fact. Otschir belongs to the race of the Torguds, and is even connected with their prince; but we were told his people plundered Torguds and Derbodians indifferently; and it is highly probable that those banditti who robbed and murdered so many strangers, belonged to the tribe of the three brother princes. Towards evening a heavy rain fell, and perceptibly cooled the atmosphere.

On the 12th of July, we visited the prince, and requested an introductory letter to his subjects, as also a guide to the horde of the Erkedi. The first request he decidedly refused, under the pretence,

that his subjects were already acquainted with our intention, and did not want any of our books; with respect to the guide, he gave us no positive answer. The unfavourable disposition of the prince towards us, was now generally known amongst his subjects, and many of them came on purpose to ridicule and insult us. On such occasions, we had often opportunity to remark the bitter hostility of the Tartar merchants against the Gospel, manifested to ourselves in words, and shown by the influence which they were perpetually exerting over the Calmucs. It was still more painful to us, to observe Christians themselves opposing the Scriptures, which was the case of the Armenians at this place. Three of them came to us, while some ecclesiastical Calmucs were with us, and reading the Scriptures; they asked us, jeeringly, if we meant to make Christians of these men? and what we had in our books? We replied, that we had come here to spread these books amongst the Calmucs; that they contained the sacred Word of God, which the Armenians, being themselves Christians, must be acquainted with. Upon this, one of them replied that he had never read it, and

they all went away with the foolish words, "We want no such books,—gold is our bible." Notwithstanding all this opposition, our presence had occasioned so much curiosity and enquiry amongst the Calmucs, that many of them were induced to visit us, and to read out of our books, but they were afraid of taking them home. As there were amongst the curious a number of those who only came to amuse themselves, and who began to lay the books on one another's heads, and mimic in sport the way in which the Gellongs give the blessing with their sacred books, we dismissed all such, with notice that our books were not designed for such folly. A Gezull, who had received one of our tracts, came very soon after to return it, with the excuse that he would come the next day, when we were keeping the Christ-day, (as the Russians call Sunday,) and fetch one of our larger books, which, however, as we expected, turned out to be false. A Gellong asked for a book, with fear and trepidation, and hid it under his white robe, but unluckily it dropped out soon after, just as some Gezulls enquired what he had hidden under his robe, which embarrassed the poor man not a little. Another Gellong, who had been a layman at the time of

the French war, and had fought against France, came to us in the dusk of the evening, and asked for books. Two Gezulls, who were probably his attendants, followed at a little distance. One of our men happened to call out from behind the coach, at which the Gellong started, and gave us back our books; but finding that the noise proceeded from our own people, he grew composed, and handed the books to his Gezulls, one of whom concealed them in his white robe; the other refused to venture, and said, "Perhaps, the prince's servants may see me, and then it will bring me into disgrace;" from which it was evident, that the prince had forbidden the application for books. At the instigation of the Gellong, the Gezulls now crept timidly along, the one who carried our books going before to give a sign in case of alarm.

On the 13th of July, the night had been cold and stormy, and as the wind blew the pouring rain almost horizontally against our carriage, our things were almost wet through. Nothing remained for us but to keep in the open space during the storm, for our coach afforded no farther protection, and the water stood in pools under our bed.

We afterwards heard that it had been stormy weather, at the same time, in the neighbourhood of the Don, which is much farther to the west.

After many vexatious negotiations with the prince, he at last promised us a guide as far as the frontiers of the Erkedan territory. The accounts we had heard of the unsafeness of this neighbourhood, in which the travellers of all the different nations whom we met here united, and which we could not doubt, as a cossack, who was dispatched with letters to the High Pristaw, actually returned because he durst not venture through the midst of the robbers;—this, and the often repeated question, "How many men strong is your party? and how many guns do you carry?" induced us to purchase a gun at the bazaar, that we might seem better armed, and also to load our pistols and guns with ball, and put them in good order, in the sight of a number of Calmucs. Before we left, Otschir most likely gave leave to his subjects to ask for our books; for we were now visited by a stream of priests, and even during our journey they followed us, and entreated for books, which they received

CHAPTER VIII.

JOURNEY TO THE ERKEDAN HORDE, AND RESIDENCE IN THE CAMP, FROM THE 14TH TO THE 22ND OF JULY.

ON the 14th of July, at half-past eleven o'clock, we set off towards the horde of Erkedi, which was about forty or fifty versts to the south, along the ridge of the Sarpa hills, arising from the Don on one side, and from the Lower Steppes on the other. There are many and some considerable channels in the sides of these hills. The guide who accompanied us, might, from his appearance, have been a captain of banditti; and though we gave him tobacco, and other trifling presents, we found it impossible to dispel his unsocial expression. When we had advanced a few versts, I perceived

that he perversely kept on a full trot, without choosing to observe that the coach, from the ruggedness of the ground, could not keep up with him. I rode after him, and resolved to keep my eye upon him, from a little distance, as he would not attend to my admonition, not to go so fast. When he thought himself far enough from us, he turned off into one of the channels to hunt; but my horse was better than his, and after a few versts I caught him and commanded him, with threats, to dismount and wait till the coach overtook us. As I was armed, and he saw that he was in my power, he obeyed, though reluctantly, and excused himself by saying, that he was looking for a road which was somewhere thereabouts. The coach overtook us, and we continued our journey till it needed some little repair, and, in the mean time, the guide made his escape. We were not altogether unconscious of his intention, but we were weary of keeping by force, a wretch who would undoubtedly have delivered us to the first gang of robbers with great satisfaction.

We were now alone in an unknown desert, without knowing what course to take, and expecting every moment to fall into the hands of robbers

and murderers: we had before been told, that, just in this very neighbourhood, a merchant of Zaritzin had been plundered, and some others cruelly murdered. In all this danger, however, our hearts were lighter for having got rid of our perverse guide, and we determined, in case we were attacked, to make a brave defence, since we were equally (indeed more) sure of being put to death if we made no resistance. We arranged the method and plan of defence, and resolved to make a rampart of our carriages, and to shelter ourselves behind them. We admonished our Tartars not to go too hastily to work, and to spare the lives of the enemy as much as possible; but, above all things, not to trust in their own strength, but, while each did his part, to commend the result to God, and to trust in His help.

In the latter part of the afternoon, we came upon a road, and perceived traces, first of one horse, then of two, three, and at last of four. We were not a little afraid that some of the banditti of Otschir's horde had gone before us, to lie in ambush, with their comrades, in some convenient spot; or, that our runaway guide had fetched a gang of robbers from some hiding-place

in one of the dry channels. Some time after, we saw a horseman at a little distance, who crossed our course and rode towards a channel which is called Sergesta, and runs into the Don. As we were very much in want of information about the situation of the horde to which we were going, I followed him, and happily caught him before he reached the channel, to which he was making his escape, supposing that we were enemies. I learnt from him, that we were in the direct road to the Erkedan camp. At sunset we watered our horses at an arm of the Sergesta, and, on leaving it, unaccountably lost our road, and tried in vain to find it again. At first we hoped it was only hid by the long grass near the channel, and that we should soon see it again, but in vain. There was nothing left for us, but to direct our course by the stars, and travel wearily onwards over the dreary Steppes, without a path, and with the constant apprehension of being overtaken by robbers. After some time, we were stopped by a stream, with high steep banks, and the moon playing on the water between them. We were, of course, obliged to go round by its source, as we afterwards did to other streams, which were

all flowing towards the Don. In some of the channels we could see, by the faint light of the moon, that wells had been dug; others were full of water. We guessed, from the course of these channels, that we had got too far to the right, and, for fear of losing ourselves still more completely, we determined to take up our quarters for the night in the first grassy place we came to. This was at eleven o'clock, and we then perceived that we had wandered so far from the road that it would not be easy for robbers to find us. We kept watch, nevertheless, the whole night through, and held ourselves in readiness for an attack; but He, without whose consent not a hair could fall from our heads, watched over us also. We rose from our couch joyous and thankful to see the morning light in safety.

It was the 14th of July, and the text for the day accorded exactly with our perilous situation, "Behold I send you forth as sheep amongst wolves;" yet we were able to unite with our whole hearts in the chorus—"He is our help and shield," which was also a part of the service. After some consideration, we directed our course S.S.E., in which quarter we thought that the Erkedans must be

encamped. At a distance I spied a few Tartar grave-hillocks, which are always placed on an eminence, and I therefore concluded that there was either a channel or a valley behind them; to ascertain this, I rode to the spot, and as I drew near, an immence valley opened before me. It was (as I afterwards learned) the Yaschkelihn Tungata, which winds in various directions amongst the ridges of hills, and is at last lost amongst the heights at an almost immeasurable distance. On one of the nearest hills which commanded the valley, three cranes were singing their joyous morning song, and on another a murderous eagle was watching for prey. Afar off, were Calmuc huts, and numerous herds grazing over the valleys and hills, while the whole rich landscape was gilt with the bright rays of the morning sun. For a moment I thought I was in my native land, at the foot of the Giant's' mountain, till I noticed a Calmuc on horseback, who reminded me that I was a wanderer on the Astracan Steppes. A truant camel which he was pursuing had led him into the heights: from him I learnt that the Erkedan horde was in the valley below, and when our carriages had come up to us, he pointed out at a distance the

road which led to the camp, and which we had yesterday unaccountably missed. Relieved from our anxieties and painful uncertainty, we continued our journey with pleasure, and arrived about eleven o'clock at the Kura * of the Erkedans.

The horde of the Erkedes (or the free), of Torgud race, and estimated at 1000 tents, or families, is entirely dependent upon Russia, and is governed by Saissangs, or nobles of its own body, appointed by the Russian emperor, who derives no advantage from this part of his possessions. As there is here no Oergo (or prince's court), the Kura, or circle of ecclesiastical huts surrounding the Lama, may be considered as the centre or head-quarters of the encampment, and one of the Saissangs in command, is usually residing in this

* The word kura signifies a circle,) or something that surrounds,) but it is more particularly applied to the huts of the ecclesiastics surrounding the Churuls, or idol temples. The Chinese station on the Russian frontier, which is mentioned in German geographical works, under the name of "Kura, the residence of a high Lama and vice khan," is only one of these kuras. Thus, the capital of the famous Genghis Khan, which is known in history under the name of Karakorum, was originally Chara Kura, or, in the Tartar dialect, Kara Kura, the circle of the Blacks, or common people.

Kura. In all the Calmuc hordes, the administration of public affairs, which is divided between the princes and the superior priests, is transacted within this circle.

We experienced from the Saissang Memé, a fine young man whom we found in this Kura, the utmost respect and friendship that we could expect in a Calmuc horde. Before he had finished reading the letter from Count Nesselrode, he gave orders that a large handsome tent from the Kura should be made ready for us, at a little distance, and he took every possible precaution about getting our cars (which were heavily laden with books,) over a bog called Yaschkel, which it was necessary that they should cross. When our tent was pitched, he went himself with some of his nobles to welcome us to it, and treated us with biscuits and brandy, which were here to be had at the bazaar.

The camels, in the mean time, were bringing Memé's own tent, which he ordered to be pitched close by ours, that he might always be accessible to us. When we had explained to him more fully the document which he had read, he gave notice to the people of our arrival, and of the object of

our visit; those who were in our neighbourhood immediately crowded to us for books, which the governor distributed in part with his own hand, to encourage the people to receive them without fear. Very soon, however, some of the Mandschi came weeping back, with their books, because the Gellongs had chastised them for receiving them; and the Gellongs themselves appeared in front of our hut, but with such anxious countenances, that Memé feared the Lama's displeasure, and communicated his apprehensions to us. We requested him, upon this, to accompany us to the Lama's hut, which he did the following day, the 15th of July. He had previously paid a visit to the Lama himself, and he brought us word, that the Lama was very uneasy, and feared we should make them all into Russians. He had been displeased also with the respect which Memé had shown us, and had reproached him a little on this head. When we visited the Lama, we were desirous of presenting him with a copy of our books, but he was too timid to accept it; he complained also of his old and bad eyes, which prevented him from reading. As we knew that his example would have great weight, we pressed him to receive a

copy for the Gellongs, that the design of the Emperor might not be frustrated, and that they might have an opportunity of examining the contents of the Gospel; we cited the conduct of Bakschi Sahma as a precedent for him,—he however maintained, that they wished to abide by their old religion, and wanted no other,—that, in the mean time, they should always remain good and peaceable subjects, and pray for the Emperor and the welfare of the kingdom, in their own way. We were forced to return with our books, without disposing of one of them.

We were told by the governor, on this occasion, that an Ukase had been sent to them the year before, in which it was represented to the Calmucs, that inasmuch as "they had formerly been a great and mighty people, and were now few and inconsiderable, this was the consequence of their religion (which they had not anciently professed) and which had no power to render them prosperous. That they should consider, on the other hand, what a great and mighty nation the Russians formed, which was owing to the purity of their faith, for which reason *they* also should adopt the Christian religion, that they might become again a great

nation, and for this purpose they should unite more closely with the Russians." Memé added, that they had not been able to agree amongst themselves on this subject; that some of them wished to embrace the overture, and others objected.

We were still more convinced from this account, that there was no encouragement for missionaries of other denominations amongst the Calmucs at present; as the national established Church, according to the declaration of the Synod in 1728, reserved the conversion of the Calmucs exclusively for itself.

When we returned from the Lama, we visited, out of curiosity, the three great Churuls in the Kura, at which the priests were making a most terrific din, whether because an evil spirit reigned on that day, or because they thought their religion in danger from us, we could not determine. At all events, they beheld us on this occasion with dread and horror, and nobody vouchsafed us one friendly glance. Besides those contained in the head Kura, we were told of ten Churuls scattered about with the rest of the horde. The behaviour of the Lama, and of his priests, soon

had its effect on the people. Nobody now came to ask us for books, and those whom the governor strove to encourage, replied, "Why should we take books more than the other hordes?" Here, again, the priests formed the great barrier against the spread of the Bible. Bakschi Sahma alone had not attempted to thwart our endeavours.

As experience had now shown that there was less possibility of disseminating the Scriptures amongst the Calmucs than we had expected, and there was no reason to suppose that our large provision of books would be more wanted in other hordes than they had been in these; as our horses, besides, were jaded, and our cars coming to pieces, we sent a large chest of books (by a Zaritzin merchant) back to Sarepta, where they arrived in safety, but were consumed on the 9th of August in the great fire. The merchant to whom we committed them had been seized and plundered by robbers a few days before, in the very spot where we lost our road, and it was only after many prayers, and at the intercession of one of the gang, that they suffered him to escape with life. His hands, feet, and back, were

blue and swollen with the blows he had received, and I therefore gave him some of our stock of healing plaster and spirits of camphor. Another merchant (from Astracan), had left this place, on his way home, the day but one before, because he felt ill, and had died on the steppes, a little way off. All the Russians who were residing at this time in the camp rode out towards evening to be present at his interment. At sunset we perceived, by the hoarse rustling noise from a distance, that a swarm of locusts was in the neighbourhood, and a huge army of them soon broke in at the north-east end of the valley, in such numbers that they darkened the air. It appeared as if they designed to settle on the Kura, which threw the priests (who, perhaps, considered it a bad sign, that the swarm had passed over our tent and Memé's,) into the greatest alarm. They set up a hideous shout, and the Mandschi ran about howling and wafting clothes amongst the hovering locusts. Fortunately they succeeded, by this means, in dispersing most of their unbidden guests.

In the evening we visited some poor little

chapels in the neighbourhood, which were built of stone and clay, in honour of some of the principal Gellongs.

On the 16th of July, a new swarm of locusts came rustling from the west; they entered the valley in a thick body, twenty or thirty feet deep, close over the ground, and a thousand paces in width. Part of them settled, in spite of all the clamour of the Calmucs, between the bazaar and the governor's hut, in thick masses, piled upon one another, and the remaining myriads continued to swarm in the air. All the opposition of the Calmucs was now unavailing; the locust only rose rapidly into the air, and settled again in a moment. A hundred cossacks and an officer arrived this day from Tschornoijah, on their way to Caucasus. Memé, who had begun to confide in us, asked our advice as to how he should behave, for no soldiers had been at the place since he was governor. We advised him to make friends of the officer, and, if he should ask for guides, (which, as it turned out, he did,) to comply without hesitation. In the evening we had a visit from this officer, who was a gentlemanly man, and well acquainted with the Bible-Society. He got Memé to show him the

Minister's letter, which was written both in the Russian and Calmuc languages; and he testified much respect for the operations of the Bible-Society. He encouraged Memé as much as he was able, to concur in the promulgation of the Scriptures, in compliance with the will of the Emperor, and the requisition which had been sent to the hordes. "If they did not want to read the books now," he said, "they could keep them till they did." The Lama sent us a vessel of tschigan this evening, because he heard that we drank it; and he repeated this acceptable gift the next day.

On the 17th of July, the cossacks continued their march. The same day a Mandschi fetched one of our books; he was the first of the priests who applied, and the last person who came on that errand.

On the 18th of July, we left the encampment to proceed to the second governor of the horde, who was stationed a few days' journey more to the east, to whom Memé provided us with guides. When we had taken a friendly leave of Memé and his family, who were at some little distance from the Kura, we came to a group of huts, and the elder,

according to the Calmuc custom, presented us with a cup of milk and brandy, without delaying our journey. Our guide had been revelling the night before at a marriage-supper, and was so overcome with sleep and weariness, after his hard drinking, that he could hardly sit on his horse. As we had a plain way before us, we let him lie in one of the carts, where he contrived to lose his cap, and was forced to travel bare-headed, till he could procure another from a Calmuc.

We quartered for the night on a high grave-hillock by the Yaschkel water, and killed a sheep, which our guide, by order of the governor, had taken from a Calmuc, and which supplied us with supper. As there was no firing in the neighbourhood, we were forced to supply its place with the fat tail of the sheep, or, I should rather say, with the bundle of fat (sometimes twenty pound in weight) which occupies the place of the tail, and with the rest of the fat from the beast we had killed, which gave out prodigious heat when it was kindled. On the banks of the Yaschkel we found zygophyllum fabago in great abundance, as also another salt herb, the peganum harmala.

On the 19th of July, which was brother Schill's birth-day, we set off at six in the morning. After travelling fifty versts, through a district which, like that we had crossed the preceding day, was covered with locusts, we prepared our night's lodging without water either for ourselves or our horses. On the 20th of July, after a journey of four hours, we reached the Ulahan Chuduk, or Red Wells, where we stayed some hours, and refreshed ourselves and watered our horses. These wells are in a large sand-hill, like those we afterwards came to, and contain pretty good water. The sand was one half of it broken muscle-shells. While we stayed at the wells, our guide rode on to ascertain where the governor was encamped, and whether he was at home. On his return, he seemed somewhat embarrassed, pointed out a new course, and, after we had proceeded a few versts, ran away from us, under a pretence of going to some neighbouring huts to borrow a cloak. We afterwards discovered that he had been to the governor's tent, and, as the Gellongs were averse to our coming, and the governor himself was from home, they had persuaded the guide to direct us wrong, and then to make his escape, that we might not find

our way to the camp. After waiting in vain for the return of our guide, we dined, and then continued our journey, without suspicion, in the direction which had been pointed out to us. After some time we saw, by means of the optical delusion, which has been already described, a very distant prospect on our right, which, when examined with a telescope, looked like tents and camels; and, as we saw it gradually more distinctly, we held a consultation, and changed our course towards that spot. It was a chottun, or small collection of tents. The elder informed us, that the governor, Narran Ubaschi, with his Kura, was farther still to the right, not far from the Chargaihn-Chuduk (Pine-wells). We arrived there at eight in the evening. The governor was not at home, but was gone with fifteen armed Calmucs in pursuit of a troop of Truchmenes, who, from their station at more than a hundred versts distance, had undertaken a marauding expedition against the Kura, and the day before carried off five camels. The poisonous spider, which I have so often had occasion to mention,—the bellbussun chara, or black widow,—was exceedingly prevalent here. The Calmucs had killed some hun-

dreds of them in the few days before we arrived; and I found, on the 21st of July, in a few hours, and in a space of hardly forty yards in diameter, close to our quarters, no less than thirty. They harbour chiefly under the tufts of wormwood, and about the bones, which are always to be found near a Calmuc habitation, and also at the mouth of the deserted nests of the mus citellus, where they collect a sort of bed of leaves. The Pine-tree Wells, like the Red Wells, are situated in a broad basin of muscle-shell sand. Pines there are none in the neighbourhood, nor is any species of fir to be met with on the steppes, or in any part of southern Russia. Probably these wells were so called by the Calmucs, because they had been in former times boarded at the sides with pine by the Tartars, and the wood for the purpose might have been brought on the Volga from northern Russia, as it is at this day. Fragments of tiles are still to be found in the sand, and appear also to have been used in forming the wells. Near them are many large grave-hills, upon and within which we occasionally saw signs of masonry, betokening a more advanced population at some former period. Calmuc and Tartar tra-

dition ascribes those works, of which few vestiges now remain, to the great Dschani Beg Chan, who resided at Aktubah, took the appellation of Sultan Dschani Beg Chan the Just, and died in 1357. In an old well in this neighbourhood, which the Calmucs cleared out some years ago, they are said to have found a Tartar arba in a state of petrifaction. Similar cases, as we were elsewhere told, have been found in the Kuma Morass. That the saltness of the soil may have contributed to the preservation of the wood is the more probable, as something of the same sort has been experienced in the Volga fishery, where a great quantity of fish is laid in salt, and all the wood-work which is exposed to the action of the salt lake becomes hardened and incapable of decay. As nobody here would receive our books, and the priests and laity made the usual excuses, we were soon desirous of proceeding on our journey, and with much difficulty we at last prevailed upon the governor's family, on the 22nd of July, to provide us with a guide; and, as our horses were exceedingly exhausted with the long journey over the steppes, rendered still more barren by swarms of locusts, we were also to be furnished with an

additional horse for my riding. Before our departure, on the 23rd, we wished to leave books for the governor, but we could not by any means persuade his family to receive them. We were hindered from setting off as early as we wished, because our guide was forced to stay till eight o'clock to help a camel which had fallen into a well!

CHAPTER IX.

VISIT TO THE YANDYKSCHAN HORDE, AND TO THE PRINCESS NADMID, ON THE 23RD AND 24TH OF JULY.

On our way to the neighbouring horde of the Yandyks, we passed at first over some districts of red clay, which did not afford a blade of Calmuc grass. Here and there pools of water were standing on the surface; but where it was dry, the ground was glazed like ice, and was so hard that our carriages made no impression upon it. There can be no doubt that, in such situations, reservoirs might easily be formed to hold water, if the Calmucs were not so incredibly lazy, and if they knew how to make the most of their steppes. On our journey, we killed a serpent a fathom long,

and as thick as my arm, and, on opening it, we found an entire Souslik. We arrived at the Orgo (or court) of the Yandykschan horde, about two o'clock in the afternoon, after having weathered a heavy storm, with violent showers of rain. This horde, which is also a branch of the Torguds, was then governed by a young widow, the Princess Nadmid. She was a Derbodian Princess, and had married the late Sandschi Ubaschi, father of the Torgud Zerren Ubaschi. The horde she commanded was supposed to consist of one thousand tents. Ubaschi opposed her claim to the government; but she was secretly supported by the Derbodian Princes, who carry on a perpetual feud with Zerren Ubaschi. The head-quarters were then in a wide valley, enclosed by two long narrow ridges of hills, on one of which were two beautiful chapels, (a stone and a wooden one,) the monumental memorials of two old Lamas. The other ridge is formed of fine yellow sand full of shells, with a few steep upright masses of clay. In the large hollow, or basin, at the top of this ridge, are the Black-willow Wells, from which the place receives its name of Udun-Chuduck. There are three old willows near the well, into the trunk of which the

larva of the geotrupes nasicornis had worked their way, in great numbers, and been followed by a family of woodpeckers, (picus major,) who had built their nests here. These trees were the first we had seen since we had left the Volga, at Tschornoijah, two months before, and they were the last we met with on the interior steppes, which do not afford even a bush. On account of the rarity of trees in these parts, the willows are esteemed sacred by the Calmucs, and nobody would dare to break off a twig of them. Cotton flags, inscribed with Tangud prayers, were hung on some of the boughs, that they might bring blessings upon the neighbourhood, whenever they were shaken by the wind. We waited upon the Princess the day we arrived, and found her in the cleanest and handsomest habitation that we had yet beheld amongst the Calmuc princes. We had no recommendatory letter from the Minister to present to her, but we were nevertheless received in a most friendly manner, and when we had explained the purport of our visit, she begged us to come to her again the next morning. When we returned to our carriages, we found a sheep, which she had sent us, and we were invited to occupy the hut of the

Pristaw, who was absent, as it seemed likely to rain. We availed ourselves of the offer, and sent the usual presents to the Princess.

On the 24th of July, when we visited her again, and offered our books, the Princess at first showed some disinclination to receive them, and said she had enough to do to study her own Nomen, and did not wish for a new one. She made the books over to an attendant, and continued telling the beads of her rosary. By and by, when she had made farther inquiries, whether Zerren Ubaschi had received our books, and whether the Derbodians received them, and we told her that her brother, the Derbodian Dschamte, was a good friend of mine, and that the Derbodian Gellongs had fetched numbers of these books from Sarepta, she changed her mind about the matter, and asked us, why we had not told her all that at first. The consequence was, that she desired her subjects to receive our books without any hesitation, and we distributed here, during our visit of less than two days, as many volumes as we had left behind in all the other hordes through which we had travelled.

In the afternoon, we saw the ecclesiastical Kura, consisting of a great number of huts, and

containing many Churuls, remarkable for their beauty and riches. The number of priests, of all ranks, who inhabit this Kura, was variously stated, but all agreed that it exceeded three hundred. We meant to have visited the old Lama, but as he was asleep, we went to see the most distinguished of the Churul-huts, which the Gellongs showed us with uncommon friendliness and good-will. When they heard that we understood the representations of their idols, they took out a number of large rolls of them out of a chest by the altar, and hung them up to try our skill. Amongst others, they showed us one very gaily-coloured old picture, which differed exceedingly from all the rest, and was quite unknown to us. This had been brought from China a great while ago, and was as inexplicable to the Calmucs as it was to us. On account of its singularity, it was placed next to the altar. Had a Paul been present, he might have been roused (as of old at Athens) by the ignorance and idolatry of the people, to proclaim to them the true and unknown God. It was ours to be mindful of the injunction we had received, and to confine ourselves solely to the distribution of the Scriptures, without attempting any other

instruction. On our return we were visited by a multitude of Gellongs, Gezulls, and Manschis, as also by several of the laity, who could read, and all wished for books.

Agreeable as our stay here might be, in consequence of the friendly reception we had met with, we could not protract it, unless we intended that our poor horses, who were already almost worn out with the journey, should die of hunger: the whole valley and the surrounding country had been stripped of vegetation, to the very roots, by armies of locusts. The Calmucs had sent all their cattle to a distance, and the tschigan, which was necessary for the court and the priests, was transmitted from thence. Water also was scarce, and our Tartars were at first forbidden to water the horses, till they persuaded the Calmucs that they were on government business, and then they not only got the water, but prevailed on the Calmucs to bring it to them. We suffered ourselves from a scarcity of provisions. For a long time we had had no other food than Calmuc tea and sheep's flesh,—seldom fresh, but drawn out in square lumps from our prog-bag, and eaten without rice or bread. During our residence in

Otschir's horde, we had found means to buy some meal, which we kneaded into a sort of heavy dough in our horse-trough, and of this we had made a few cakes with the fat of our sheep. By this means, we had a number of portable lumps, or balls, which rattled like nuts in the bag which carried them, but they were soon despatched, and left us as badly off as before. In the Erkedan horde we had bought some brandy, because our former stock had either gone bad or been given to Dschirgal. In these circumstances, it was very fortunate for us that we here found an opportunity of purchasing a small provision of rice, which was one of our greatest necessaries.

CHAPTER X.

JOURNEY TO THE BAGAN-ZOCHER HORDE, FROM THE 25TH OF JULY TO THE 6TH OF AUGUST.

After we had taken leave of the Princess Nadmid, on the 25th of July, we set off with a faithful guide, and a horse which had been provided for us, in a north-west direction to the horde of the Bagan-zochers. On the way we found some curious insects, and amongst others a species of mantis, which I had never seen before, and ought to describe. It is something like the mantis pauperata of Fabricius, but it is distinguished by a remarkable projection on its head. The singular tribe of the mantis is styled by the Calmucs, morini zarra, (horse locust) though they are not, in fact, locusts at all, but prey upon other insects. As they often put themselves into a praying attitude while they perch on the

plants waiting for victims, the Turks call them Imans, and fancy that they always turn their faces towards Mecca.

Another very curious insect, which was known to antiquity, may be found here in great abundance—the cicada plebeia. The alis noubara, (one of which we shot this day and enjoyed for our dinner.) is also an object of attention to naturalists. This creature is not often to be met with here, and more properly belongs to Arabia. At half-past eight in the evening, we prepared our quarters for the night, by the first of the Tohstu Chuduk, or dusty wells, of which there were two. On the 26th, after two hours' journey, we came to the second of these; and we dined, at half after ten, at the Dolon Tangcha Chuduk. Three hours after we left it, we came to the Burdschin Tangcha Chuduk; and at half-past eight in the evening, after leaving on one side, at the distance of a verst, the Tobihn Tangcha Chuduk, (this word Tangcha we never could get properly translated,) we arrived at the Zembel Gelonggihn Tangcha Chuduk, where we passed the night. All these wells, like those before mentioned, and all we found between here and the Volga, are formed in basins of sand.

On this day's journey our horses were changed at every little group of huts, as if we were posting; and we had therefore, besides our guide, a fresh companion every time we changed horses. This method of posting is used amongst the Calmucs, by those who travel on behalf of any of the princes, and by such of the Russian Government officers, as may choose to avail themselves of it. It is the custom with the owners of the horses, never to bring them up for use on these occasions, but to let the traveller catch them himself out of the herd, with a noose, so that it depends upon his own luck and skill what sort of a beast he may get. If a horse is caught, the owner follows very quietly (perhaps an hour after,) and receives it, at the next post, without asking for any payment. At this place the horses were particularly wild, and it was only after a long chase, that we succeeded in noosing a fine large one; the owner of the last, who was a Gezull, was then dismissed. After dark, when we were preparing our supper, two armed Calmucs rode in amongst our horses, who were grazing. Our guide immediately suspected their intent, and went to stop them. They might have pleaded necessity, but they were guilty

of falsehood and deceit. In consequence of this attempt, our guide desired to have a watchman from one of the huts near the well. It happened that the men were most of them gone to look after their cattle, or to pursue some thieves of the horde of Zerren Ubaschi; so we had a Gellong for our watchman, and he discharged his office with great fidelity, as our guide had previously informed him that he was to be responsible for any loss or damage.

On the 27th of July, we proceeded on our journey, accompanied by another Gellong, after giving our guide leave to return (as we were now very near the Bagan-Zocher horde,) and furnishing him, according to our agreement with the Princess, with a written testimonial of his good conduct. An hour and a half after, we reached the Mansa Tangcha Chuduk. Here we stopped to dine, and at one o'clock we proceeded again, leaving on our right the Usta Chuduk; we travelled till eight in the evening, when we arrived at Gaschogihn Burre Chuduk, where we found many old fragments of tiles. Here we slept. On the 28th, we set off at five o'clock, and leaving on our right Chalgaihn Burre Chuduk, (the well of the grey

path,) we reached Bulchtu Chuduk at eleven o'clock, and stopped there to dine. Two hours after we left it, we came to the Kura of the Baganzocher horde, situated between two wells, Namurdschin Chuduk, (the harvest well,) near which there is a poor-looking Zaza, on the north-west, and Burdschin Burre Chuduk, (the duck's well,) on the south-east. We were now to deliver the fourth of the Minister's letters to the governor of this horde, which contains 1700 families, and is dependent on Russia. The rulers at that time were the Saissangs Onker, (brother-in-law of Prince Erdeni,) Dschedschib, and Otschir. As they were all engaged till a late hour, at a state consultation in the Kura, we could not pay them a visit that night.

On the 27th of July, at an early hour, we waited upon the Saissang Onker, and delivered to him in the presence of many Tartars, and some of the Cossacks and Calmucs, the letter we had brought from Count Nesselrode. After reading it hastily, he inquired who wrote it, (as the Russian signature had not been translated;) how our business had fared in the other hordes; who paid the expense of the journey; what our wages were, and whether we had given any Scriptures to the

Tartars. When we had answered all these questions, which were addressed to us in an insulting manner, we were referred to the second governor, Dschedschib, and Onker said he would follow us thither to give us audience. The third governor, Otschir, was also present on that occasion. Onker repeated the same queries, and desired that we would write the Minister's name upon the letter in Calmuc characters; which we refused, and the more, as Otschir openly accused us of forging the letter. We told him we were willing to write the name upon another piece of paper, but this he did not require. We now called his attention to the official seal on the letter, and told him, if he were suspicious of us to such a degree as to suppose us capable of a forgery, he had better send the letter to the Pristaw at Tenatagewsk, who could easily tell him who wrote the letter; as he could not read the Russian writing himself. Onker now addressed us, and asked what the books were for, and what prayers we wanted to teach them? We replied, that the books which we came to offer them, contained God's holy Word, teaching us His will, to our own salvation, and enabling us to walk in His ways; that we, therefore, desired that the Calmucs

also should reverence these books, and find salvation from them, and they would then know how and what they should pray. Onker retorted jeeringly, that if the books were the word of the Most High God, he should like to know how we happened to bring them just now, and why our forefathers had not done it long ago, as it was not proper to keep any thing so precious and important to oneself. We replied, that there was one allwise and omniscient God, who well knew the desirable season for making His word known to them; that as all things were guided and governed by Him, He had put it into the heart of the Emperor, to take measures for the promulgation of the Divine Word amongst all the tribes of his extensive empire; and that it was therefore evident, that this was the proper season for acquainting the Calmucs with the Gospel. We expressed a wish that the object of our visit should be announced to the people; to which Onker replied, that he had read the Minister's letter in the presence of a great many Tartars and Calmucs, and that it was no doubt sufficiently known already; but he consented to announce it further, which, however, he never did.

In the afternoon, we visited the Lama, a hearty sexagenarian. When he had heard our business, he advised us to distribute books amongst the nobles and heads of the horde. We replied, that the Gospel was given not merely for the high and noble, but for the poor, both of priests and laity; that the religion of Jesus was not merely the religion of the Russians or of the Germans, but designed from the first for the whole human race. "It is just so with ours," said a Gellong who was present; "*our* religion is for the whole world." "Good," said I; "let us examine; we Christians hate darkness, and are always ready to search out what is good: give us some of your theological works, that we may learn the foundation of your religion, and do you take ours in return, and see what is the spirit and character of them—then we can discuss the matter farther." They had no inclination to do this, and they remained in silence. Here again we were reproached for not having brought the Gospel till now. We replied, that this also was written in the counsel of the great God; that our ancestors, a thousand years ago, had a different religion, and trusted, like themselves, in many gods; but that when the

Gospel was preached to them, they cast off their many idols, and believed in the one God, of whom, and by whom, are all things, and to whom alone Christians pray. The Lama expressed his approbation of what we had said, exclaiming, "Fine, fine." He desired that we would show our books to his Gellongs, and wished us success.

On the 30th of July the governors were too much occupied with affairs of state to attend to us much, because Onker was about to set off for the Calmuc council of eight judges. They took, however, one copy of the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles for the use of the three.

The Calmuc council, which is called the Naiman Sarga, or eight judges, consists of eight Calmucs chosen from the hordes as deputies, who, under the presidency of the High Pristaw, administer justice to the hordes; as they also direct the foreign affairs of the nation, (through the medium of the High Pristaw,) they may be considered as the organ of government, both for internal and foreign concerns. The powerful horde of the Derbodians has the privilege of choosing three of these judges out of its own body; other hordes elect one, and of those still smaller, two are repre-

sented by the same judge and counsellor. There ought also to be a Russian chargé-d'affaires in each horde, in the capacity of Vice-Pristaw, whose office it is to transact Government business, and act for the Pristaw, but (as I have already mentioned) these officers were absent at the time of our journey to the hordes. This evening the sun set without any splendour, which is a sign of great drought.

When we waited on the governor on the 31st of July, we were asked whether those who took our books would receive money or pay it, and whether we should write down the name of the recipients. We told them that the books would be given gratis to those who wished for them, and were able to read them; and that we should merely make a list of the governors, or princes of the different hordes, and how many books we had distributed in each of their hordes. This worked upon them so far, that in the afternoon we were sent for to the governors, who were sitting in council with some Gellongs and elders; they showed us a sketch of a circular letter, which was to be sent round to their subjects on our behalf, and which we found quite satisfactory. The governors then desired us to set

down that they had taken two volumes of our books. As this neighbourhood had also been devastated by locusts, (who extended their ravages from here to the Crimea,) and our horses were so extenuated that some of them were unable to stand; we sent this day, the first of August, to the Russian village of Kopanowskaja, for oats for our horses, and provisions for ourselves. In the evening, we were visited by some inquisitive Gellongs, but they did not ask for our books. During the night, we had a violent tempest, with pouring rain, and the storm threatened every moment to overturn our tent. Towards the evening of the 2nd of August, the governor Dschedschib paid us a visit, and told us that Onker was gone to the eight judges, and that the High Pristaw was expected that night. We thought it extraordinary, that he was so communicative all at once, when he had not visited us before, and we suspected that no good would come of it. On the 3rd, the High Pristaw Kachanof was expected early in the morning, and a tent was pitched for his use between us and the Kura. His secretaries occupied a second tent, his attendants a third, and a fourth was allotted for his kitchen. He came with his wife,

in a very handsome carriage, with three coaches full of his suite, and accompanied by a small guard of Cossacks. He had accomplished this journey from the Derbodians, without any regular road, and with Calmuc horses unused to harness, of whom he employed more than thirty at once. We immediately waited upon this gentleman, and were received with great respect and kindness, and invited to breakfast, dinner, and supper, so that we were to spend the whole day with him. Our table was laid across a camp-bedstead, and the company, who sat round it cross-legged on Russian carpets, were the High Pristaw himself and his wife, a Pristaw from Tenalajewsk belonging to the Bagan-zocher horde, two Cossack officers, two Russian secretaries in uniform, and a German secretary out of uniform, who acted as our interpreter, making, with Brother Schill and myself, ten persons. No interpreters of the Calmuc language were present. Kachanof asked us, amongst other questions, how many missionaries from the establishment at Sarepta were now amongst the Calmucs, for he had read in some newspaper that the United Brethren had eight missionary-stations in the Calmuc hordes; (a false statement which

had been copied from the Hamburgh papers into the Russian.) Also, whether the Calmucs received our overtures willingly. We informed him, as to the first of these queries, that we had not a single missionary station amongst the Calmucs; that our object in this journey was not to preach to the people, but simply and solely (as he might see by the Minister's letter) to distribute the Scriptures. He then inquired about the disposal of the books, *where* and *how* we had given the greatest number. He said, if he had leisure to undertake the business, he should set about it very differently; distribute more than a thousand books in a few months, and baptize five hundred or more of the Calmucs; he would answer for it, that the true way was not to preach to them too much beforehand, but to give them a few books, particularly little tracts, and when they had read these, to baptize them. The people, he said, were ignorant, and did not understand long-winded addresses. They must first go to school; and he then told us of a Russian and Calmuc hornbook, with creed and commandments annexed, which he said was already at the press in Astracan for the purpose. This would be of additional use, because it would teach the Russian

language. As for Catholics and Lutherans, he maintained that they would never make any way with the Calmucs; they were too *foreign* for them, but the Russian established church would find it easier, because the Calmucs are more sociable with the Russians. As he repeated the last assertion with some emphasis, we told him, that the United Brethren had never attempted to effect a general national conversion of a whole idolatrous people; that their endeavour was only to collect such individual souls, as, by their humble services, might have been won to the Christain faith, into a little church of Christ, and to receive them as such. Kachanof then complained of the barbarism of the Calmucs who had been baptized into the Russian Church, declaring, that they were not a hair better than their heathen countrymen, and that this was doubtless owing to the entire want of Russian teachers and ministers for the converts. Five-and-twenty families, who had been baptized, had been lost again amongst the heathens, and he had never been able to find them. He then inquired after the Calmuc settlers on our land at Sarepta, how many there were, and whether they had been baptized. He thought they only stayed there because

they got money from us and paid no taxes. To this we replied, that these settlers not only received no money, or other assistance from us, but that they were compelled punctually to transmit the tax they owed to their prince, by the hands of the Sareptan Governors; that they remained solely for the purpose of building themselves up in the faith without molestation, which they would not have been suffered to do amongst their own countrymen; and that when they were thoroughly established in the Christian doctrine, they would be baptized &c. We took the opportunity of asking him for a permit for these settlers, that they might remain on the Sareptan land in peace and safety. To this he first replied, that the Sareptan Governors must apply to him in writing; but when we inquired more particularly, whether such an application would avail, he said, after a little consideration, that it would not do to grant a permit, and that those of our settlers who were Derbodians, must go home to their horde, for the Prince had demanded them from himself over and over again: "Your Derbodians," added he, "must take care of themselves, or their countrymen will carry them off, some day or other."

On the 4th of August, Kachanof sent for us, and for some of our books, and we dined with him. After we had left the table, many of the principal Calmucs came to transact business with the High Pristaw, amongst them was an eminent Gellong. Kachanof ordered a plate of confectionary to be set before him, and then showed him a list of Calmuc names, which, he explained to him through the interpreter, was an account of the subscribers to the Bible Society. We observed amongst them, many Saissangs of different hordes. The poor Gellong was utterly bewildered in this affair, so new to him; did not know *why* the money was collected, or what could induce the Calmucs to subscribe for the support of a foreign religion, of which they were wholly ignorant. The interpreter made short work of the matter, and chiefly insisted upon the sums which had been given by those of the Gellong's rank, by which he was at last induced to have his name set down for five roubles; he was afterwards obliged to add ten more, before he was clear of the matter. The High Pristaw then gave him two copies of our books, as also to the Bagan Rocher judge, who was there as one of the Council of Eight. One of these Calmucs had just subscribed fifteen

roubles to the Bible Society; and the other, as we were informed, five-and-twenty; but they could neither of them be prevailed upon to receive the books. The High Pristaw would not consent to resume them, but set off forthwith (with ourselves and his two interpreters) to the Lama, to canvass again for the Bible Society. All the way we went, the Gellong pursued us with entreaties that the Pristaw would take back the books. We found the Lama more resolute. The old man was as firm as a rock in his determination that he would receive none of our books; and the Pristaw's eloquence was expended upon him for two hours in vain, till at last the High Pristaw laid two of the books on the altar. The Lama quietly observed that they might be there, but that he should take care to proclaim that the High Pristaw had left them against his consent. This enraged the Pristaw, and he threw out that the governors of that horde had been guilty of mal-administration, and that they were open to a charge of embezzlement. "If they have behaved dishonestly, let them be punished," said the Lama, calmly; "they are in your hands." Kachanof replied that he would depose them, and choose others. "That is contrary to precedent," said the Lama,

"for the elders have always elected their governors; but," added he, "do as you please, for you have the power in your own hands." The High Pristaw then reproached the Lama with the poor appearance of the Churuls, and entered upon other topics: he asked the Lama, how old he was? and wished him as many years to live over again. To which the Lama replied, "If this is decreed for me, so may it be." The High Pristaw's proposal that he should subscribe to the Bible Society, he resolutely refused.

Kachanof instructed a great number of the priests (by his interpreters) in the design of the Gospel, with an annexed exhortation to them, to give their support as it was fit. On the 5th of August we had a short visit from him, and were afterwards sent for to him, with our books. We were then present at a state council, at which the Saissangs and elders of the people were assembled, with the exception of the governors, who had been accused of fraudulent practices, and had taken part in the disturbances of the other hordes. They were now to be deposed, by order of the Council of Eight, and new governors, four instead of three, to be chosen in their stead. When this

was done, the governors, who were all in the neighbourhood, were summoned to appear, their offences were recapitulated, and they were informed that they were now deposed, and liable to be tried before the council. The rules and directions for the new governors were then read aloud, after which they were feasted in a neighbouring hut. During the repast, Kachanof distributed books amongst the new governors, the Saissangs and elders, received subscriptions for the Bible Society, and recommended to all who were present, that they should give us their most zealous support. In the report of the Russian Bible Society, it may be seen that "the subscriptions from the Calmucs in the government of Astracan, amounted to 1310 roubles, many illustrious Saissangs and elders, with their wives and children, having contributed. Alas! that the same hand which brought the subscription, was so often withdrawn when it should have received God's holy word. In the afternoon, Colonel Kachanof took leave of us, expressing a wish that we might meet again in the Coschudan horde, and at four o'clock he left the encampment. After his departure, the Calmucs, who were members of the State Council, called

upon us, and stayed a few minutes, but nobody asked for any books; and excepting the two which the governors had taken, we left none in this horde but what the High Pristaw had distributed with his own hand.

After we had taken leave of the Lama, and explained to him as clearly as we could for what purpose Kachanof had collected the money, we left the horde on the 6th of August.

CHAPTER XI.

JOURNEY ALONG THE LEFT BANK OF THE VOLGA, FROM THE 6TH TO THE 9TH OF AUGUST.

We arrived at the Russian village of Kopanowskaja, on the Volga, a few hours after we set off from the Kura. I was the more rejoiced at the sight of this river, which we had parted from two months before, as we had suffered very often from want of water, and, except the old willows at the Princess Nadmid's camp, we had never seen a tree or bush since we left it. We refreshed ourselves in the village with the good things it afforded, milk, eggs, bread, &c.; and to counterbalance these comforts, we suffered much annoyance by night from gnats and fleas. We had never been troubled with either on the open steppes, because the former are the offspring of the river,

and the latter of domestic bad management. Both insects abound to such a degree in the Russian villages on the Volga and Aktubah, that they were alone sufficient to disturb our rest, though we took care always to pass the night in the open yard, or on the flat roof, where we were least exposed to them: never in the houses. We could not see the gnats in the day-time; but immediately after sunset, they filled the air in myriads, attacking us incessantly with their blood-thirsty battle song. We protected ourselves against these tiresome enemies, by procuring Russian gnat-tents, or nets, under which we could sleep. They are made of a light transparent manufacture, called Polog, in the form of a square sack a little longer and broader than a man. At the ends and corners of this sack, are loops, through which strings are passed and fastened to the poles which are fixed in the ground at the four corners; and in this manner the tent is set up. The entrance is in the long side next to the ground, which is slit up for the purpose. When you have pulled this opening to the side and crept in, it is to be replaced under the bed; and you have then secured the entrance, and placed yourself in a strong hold, being very much in the

situation of a chrysalis in a cohoon. We could protect ourselves pretty well in this manner; but our horses had no Pologs, and though we defended them as well as we could, by spreading clothes over them, they could get no rest the whole night.

On our journey the next morning (the 7th of August,) we came to many groups of Calmuc huts, all belonging to the Bagan-Zochers. This horde winters in the neighbourhood, in the meadows, on the shore of the Volga, and on its islands, on crown-land, which is at present consigned to their use. The rest of the land on the Volga, below Yenatajewsk, belongs in part to the territory of the Russian villages, and the rest to the Coschudan horde; higher up than Yenatajewsk, there is a large tract of crown-land, which is now used by the Cossacks and Calmucs. At noon we came to Yenatajewsk; and as we drew near a Dwor, as the Russian inns and waggon houses are called, we were surprised at the sight of the High Pristaw's secretary coming to meet us; his business was to invite us into the Dwor that moment, to dine with his master, whom we little expected to find there. We were forced to take our places at the table, without having time to alter our

dress. Besides the Governor and some of the principal inhabitants of the town, we found at this dinner, Batur Ubaschi, the Coschudan prince, who was on his way home from the Derbodian horde. When we had dined, Colonel Kachanof and his wife set off for the Coschudan horde in a covered boat. The rest of the party, including ourselves, attended him to the shore of the Volga, where he was met by the four new governors of the Bagan-Zocher horde, who had come from a considerable distance. At five o' clock we also left Yenatajewsk, and at ten we reached the village of Kosikowskaja. We passed the night on the open road, close to a fine pleasure-garden; but we got no rest, because we had not been able to pitch our musquito tents. On the 8th of August, we had several times herds of antelopes in sight, which had not happened to us for along time before. At the village of Seroglasowskaja, where we stopped to dine, we got our first letters from Sarepta. On leaving Seroglasowskaja we struck off from the great road towards the island of Schambia, from which we could cross to the Coschudan horde, on the opposite shore of the Volga, in Prince Seredschab's boats. This large island is entirely covered when

the Volga is at it highest elevation, and it is almost impassable when the water has recently subsided, on account of the lakes and pools, which are only dried up by degrees. The land is intersected, moreover, by a number of channels and ditches, and divided into two parts by an arm of the Volga. When we travelled on this island, it was overgrown so luxuriantly, that our coach could hardly make its way through the tufts of wild plants. Besides rich meadows, it affords agreeable groves of willows and poplars.

As there was no regular road on the island, we followed a slight track, which seemed to lead to the part we were aiming to reach. We were several times obliged to cross pools of water, many hundred feet wide, which I sounded on horseback; and on one of these occasions we lost sight of the track, and were left toour own conjectures. Soon after we were stopped by a narrow channel, many fathoms deep, at the bottom of which a little brook was running to join an arm of the Volga: we could not go round this brook; so we had nothing for it, but to cross or to return. We chose to attempt the former, as our only chance of crossing the Volga that night; and we dug through the banks

where they were lowest, till we thought we had made a road for the carriages. The earth that we had thrown into the brook during the operation, was quite safe for a man to walk upon; and we were now to try whether it would bear horses and carriage. To ascertain this point, I attempted to cross on horseback; but it cost me dear, and I had only Divine protection to thank, that I escaped with my life. When I reached the bottom of the channel, my horse, at the first step he took, was up to his knee, and there was every appearance, that if he took another step, he would sink still farther. Whilst I was wavering, for an instant, whether to turn back or to try to cross, the horse, frightened at sinking so unexpectedly, gave a violent spring, and at the same time reared to get his fore-paws on the high bank, which he could not possibly reach, and fell backwards with me into the brook. The animal had turned in falling, in its endeavours to recover its footing, which was then too late; and it fell in such a position, that my head and half the upper part of my body were between its legs. The rest of my body, and my legs, were under the horse, whose back was to the shore: they were pressed deeply

into the mud, and I was in danger of being crushed in a moment. When I perceived the state of the case, I was immediately afraid that the horse might make another attempt to get on its feet, which, if it did, it could hardly fail to kill me, for it would have been all over with my poor head. I called hastily, therefore, to my companions, who were petrified at the sight of my perilous situation, and desired they would hold the horse's legs till I could work my way out of the mud. This plan succeeded; the horse lay motionless till I had extricated myself, wincing every now and then, as if he was himself afraid of crushing me; and no sooner was I free, than he began to shake off my companions, and immediately sprang out of the morass. We could not but acknowledge it as a special mercy that the horse had turned in falling; for, if it had not been so, the high wooden pommel, which the Calmucs always use to their saddles, would have been driven into my breast. The mud too, though it was the cause of the accident in the first instance, was also instrumental in my preservation; so that I escaped entirely unhurt, and washed off the thick clay in the arm of the Volga as well as I might,

in my haste; my horse and saddle also undergoing a purification. Warned by this unhappy attempt to cross the channel, we now began to make a firmer bridge of the branches which we lopped from the trees, and thus our coach was brought over in safety. We followed the track of some cows through thick weeds, on to the sand of a dry arm of the river, with here and there a pit of water, or a small stream. We had not advanced far across this arm, before we recognised the ruts which we had lost sight of, and these we followed between two deep pits, in one of which we espied a good-sized fish. Whilst we were trying to catch this fish, we heard a plunge; and on looking round to discover the cause, we perceived that the horse in the hindmost arba, had sunk up to the middle in a quicksand. Water was now rising in a large hole where, the minute before, all had appeared to be perfectly dry, and the poor horse was plunging deeper and deeper, in a most helpless condition. By immediate exertion, we contrived to save the beast, and then proceeded without troubling ourselves any more about the fish. Soon after our second misfortune on this unpropitious island, Batur Ubaschi sent four of

his attendants to hasten us, as the Prince meant to cross the Volga that evening. We passed a wooden temple of the Calmucs on this island, and also a large brick-kiln, where the Gellongs have an excellent opportunity of exercising their lazy limbs. The Prince is going to build a brick temple, and all the work must be performed by the Gellongs, and accompanied with prayers. When we got to the shore of the island, Batur Ubaschi was gone; but, with the help of a good deal of shouting, we persuaded the Calmuc boatmen to cross twice more, though it was already dark; and thus our horses and two of the carriages were landed on the opposite shore. The old Tartar slept on the shore with the horses, and we stayed on the island with the coach: both parties passed the night under thick clouds of gnats.

CHAPTER XII.

VISIT TO THE COSCHUDAN HORDE, FROM THE 9th TO THE 13th OF AUGUST.

On the 9th of August, we crossed the Volga, before sun-rise; and as soon as we had paid the tax appointed by the Prince for our horses and carriages, we proceeded to a Russian village in the neighbourhood, which has put itself under the protection of Prince Sered-Dscheh, and whose inhabitants are subject to him. Here we lodged with an old man called Alexei, in whose house our brethren had resided during their stay in this horde.

Prince Sered-Dscheh, colonel in the Russian army, and knight of several orders, is very perceptibly distinguished by his information and

manners, from the other Calmuc Princes, and he has already done much for the civilization of his subjects, who fear him more than they love him, because they regard all his attempts at amelioration as so many pernicious innovations. He resides on the left bank of the Volga, in a large wooden castle, thirty paces in front, which he fortified with Russian outworks when he returned from the French war: in the revolutionary campaigns he commanded his own troops, and the Torguds. His castle is well fitted up in the interior, and contains a number of saloons, with mahogany furniture, lustres, mirrors, a billiard table, piano-forte, a number of clocks, &c. His Court is nevertheless held on the steppes during some part of the warm weather. When we had changed our dress, we went to the castle and delivered our introductory letter to the Prince, who received us politely and kindly. Colonel Kachanof was present likewise, and we dined at the Prince's table with him, and part of his suite, together with the Prince's daughters, two of his brothers (Batur Ubaschi and Tscheringa), a young Tartar Prince of the name of Ered-Dschab (who had some official business), and a Russian Secre-

tary of the Prince's. The Princess was ill, and we therefore did not see her. The table was set in a summer-house, in the small but beautiful garden at the back of the castle. Before dinner, a small well turned Calmuc cup of arsa, (or treble distilled Calmuc brandy) was handed round to the company, with smoked salmon, Brunswick sausage, and bread. At table we sat next the High Pristaw, who was at the Prince's right hand; his wife was on the Prince's left, next to her the Prince's daughters, and brother, and then the secretaries of the Prince and of the High Pristaw. Prince Ered-Dschab sat at the bottom of the table, and supplied the place of the mistress of the house, in helping the dishes. Every thing was well cooked, for amongst the Russian families, the Prince has in his service, besides a musician and a gardener, an excellent cook, who formerly occupied that station in the household of a Russian Count.

Chicken soup was first set on (by the Calmuc attendants) in a silver tureen; then followed beef, veal, roast mutton, and antelopes, (stuffed and not stuffed,) with cucumbers, salad, gerkins, &c. Wine was not forgotten: different sorts of Greek

wines, champagne, and other French wines, which are here of great price, followed one after another. The dessert consisted of melons, arbutus-berries, apples and plums, from the Prince's garden. Immediately after we left the table, coffee was handed round, after which the company dispersed in different directions about the garden. During dinner, and afterwards, a band of ten or twelve Calmucs, headed by the Russian musician, performed a number of German symphonies and marches, with considerable expertness: the Prince had procured the music for them from Petersburgh. The conversation at table was easy and unconstrained, generally in the Russian language, occasionally in Calmuc or Tartar, once or twice in German. Sered-Dscheh, who talked most, endeavoured to turn the conversation upon such topics as would occasion a dispute amongst the various foreigners who were assembled at his table; or bring into notice the religious peculiarities of each, that he might have the amusement of seeing how each would manage to defend his own, without affronting his neighbour. For instance, we had to account for not worshipping images, without saying any thing offensive to the

Russian; the Russians were to inform him why they undertake pilgrimages to Kiev; and Ered-Dschab (who was closely watched by some Tartars of distinction,) was to discourse of the beatitudes in the Koran, and the prohibition of wine, to which he himself paid no sort of attention. Colonel Kachanof estimated the profit which the Sareptans must make on their goods, thought little or nothing of the labour which was expended, and complained that the work was badly done. Sered-Dscheh took up our defence, and sent for some Russia leather and some raw hides, whose respective prices showed that the profit of the Sareptan tanners was not nearly so great as the Colonel had stated—and so on. Before we took our leave, the Prince told us that he would receive some of our books.

On the 10th of August, we again dined at the Prince's table, with the same company. Shortly after, the High Pristaw and his wife set off in the Prince's sixteen-oared shaloupe for Astracan, which he hoped to reach in three hours. The whole company, and the Prince's band, accompanied them to the shore of the Volga, and as long as the shaloupe was in sight, the marches

of the musicians resounded from the shore. On our return to the castle, the Prince desired to see us the next day, and added that he would take some of our books, and distribute them himself. Just at this time, an alarm was occasioned by the burning of some hurdles, a little way from the castle, and the people continued to flock together for a short time, but they soon dispersed when no farther danger was to be apprehended. When we got home to our lodging, we went, according to invitation, to pay a visit to a Calmuc of our acquaintance, and we rode through wet roads and water to his habitation, accompanied by André. In coming home after dark, we met a troop of Kirguses, about twenty in number, who were returning from Astracan to the Yaik (or Ural.) Their physiognomy resembles that of the Truchmems, and identifies them with the Moguls. André conversed a little with them, but their dialect was perceptibly different from that of the Kasan Tartars, which André spoke. The Calmucs frequently quarrel with them, and I have myself seen a Calmuc who had been dreadfully wounded with the sabres of the Kirguses.

On the 11th, we again dined with the Prince, and

it was agreed that he should take the whole residue of our books, consisting of ninety-six copies of the Gospels (some with, and some without the Acts of the Apostles), and a few hundred little tracts.

On the 12th of August, the Prince sent a messenger to fetch us and our books, and to invite us to dinner. He took possession of our stock of books, but found fault with the translation, and thought he could improve it from the Russian: his criticisms were for the most part wholly unfounded. He also wished that the names which were in the original language derivatives, (such as Apostles, Prophets, Angels, &c.) should be translated into the Calmuc tongue, that they might be generally understood, and that the expressions in the tracts which are directed against the Calmuc religion, should be softened, so as to give no offence. We asked him for an introductory letter to those of his subjects who were encamped on the left side of the Volga, (between that and Mount Bogdo,) as we should like to visit them on our way home; to this he immediately acceded, and ordered it to be drawn up, and when it was finished he signed and sealed it. After

dinner the Prince Batur Ubaschi took us to his apartment on the second story of the castle, and showed us his collection of Turkish and Asiatic weapons. A beautiful Turkish gun was particularly remarkable, and, amongst other things, for the inscription in gold letters on the barrel, which Ered-Dschab translated as follows: "The possessor of this gun may use it without sin, and whoever is killed by it may immediately be received into Paradise." We saw also a small Russian book-case, containing Karamsin's History of Russia, a translation of Carpin's travels, in Mongolic, and of "Abulgahsi Bakadur Chan," into the Russian language. Batur Ubaschi has compared this last work with the Mogul manuscripts, and he intends some day to print the marginal notes which he has made.

On the 13th of August we took leave of the Prince, thanking him for the friendly attention he had shown us; we then proceeded towards the encampment on the Aktubah. Just before we set off, the Prince sent us a large cloth full of fine apples, from his own garden, for us to take with us on our journey; which we accepted with thanks.

CHAPTER XIII.

JOURNEY TO THE AKTUBAH, FROM THE 13TH TO THE 18TH OF AUGUST.

We began our journey at noon, accompanied by Ered-Dschab, who went in the coach with us; this Prince told us that his family was originally from Bucharia, and now resident at Astracan. During the French war, he had been adjutant to General Termolof; after that, a merchant; and becoming bankrupt in his first business, he is now a tea-dealer in the Choschudan horde, with a special permission from the Prince, to gain a ruble on every package; and likewise a monopoly of the trade. Notwithstanding these privileges, he has seldom more money than he wants, and seldom less; for he has, with all his levity, a little skill in availing himself of men and affairs.

The country which we travelled through in the afternoon was covered with the most luxuriant grass, which grows up incredibly fast during the warm weather, when the water has just run off from the ground. This fertility is chiefly serviceable to the horde which wanders for pasture, where the Royal or Golden Tartar Horde used formerly to hold their station. The Blue Horde (Kuku Orda,) encamped on the Yaik, and it was probably amongst these people, that the renowned Batu-Chan met his fate; of whom we are told, that "he died in the city of Korkoda, which is no longer known!" After passing a number of floods and pits, we reached the camp at dusk, and were entertained by Ered-Dschab, in the best manner that he was able.

On the 14th of August, we had an opportunity of selling one of our arbas, which was become entirely unnecessary, as we had parted with many of our books in the other hordes, and, as I mentioned before, had sent a large chest home to Sarepta from the Erkedan horde, and another from the Bagan Rocher horde, and we had just made over the remainder to Prince Sered-Dscheh. We visited at this encampment several Princes, illustrious

Gellongs, and others, with whom Brother Schil. was acquainted, during his residence for eight years in the horde. Here, also, we had frequent opportunity of contradicting a number of false reports, about Sodnom and the other Calmucs who had left this neighbourhood with the Brethren. As we knew that our friends during their long residence in this horde, had taken great pains to distribute the Scriptures extensively amongst the Calmucs, we took occasion to inquire, whether many of them had books, and whether they wished for any: we found neither the Scriptures nor any wish for them, and some of the Calmucs informed us that there was not by this time a book to be found. As this was the state of the case, we could only leave it to the Prince, to act up to the letter which we had received from him, as his own conscience might direct—*we* could and ought to do nothing more in the business. In the afternoon, we took a walk to visit Sodnom's relations, who received us rather coolly. On our way, we saw the Bumba (or urn) of the late Prince Tummen Dschirgalang, (ten thousand joys.) This little closed Zaza had much the appearance of a monument. There is also a larger

Zaza in this neighbourhood, containing the ashes of one of their Lamas. Not far hence, we fell in with Prince Batur Ubaschi, who was chasing ducks with falcons, and we saw one of the falcons escape, so that it could not be taken again. This sport is in high estimation among the Calmucs, and we saw many people, whose whole occupation it was to rear and train falcons for the Prince. Before we returned home, we paid a visit to a clan of Tartars, who are called Cunduran-Mangut, or Mountain Tartars. They wander in this district, as far as to Mount Bogdo, and between the Calmucs and Kirguses.

These Tartars became vassals of the Calmucs, during the wars of the Calmuc Khan Donduk Omba (who died in 1741,) with the Kubaners; and remained so till the flight of the Great Horde in 1770, when they retreated to the islands of the Volga and the Caspian, and so escaping the dominion of the Chinese, became crown vassals of Russia. Their huts are exactly like those of the Calmucs, and their whole manner of living is similar. The men wear a short cotton coat, fastened round the waist by a girdle, wide pantaloons, and a sugar-loaf cloth cap with a blunt

point, and trimmed with fur; the colour and quality of the material varying with the taste and fortune of the individual. The women wear full cotton dresses, and a cloth hanging from the top of the head to the waist behind, and fastened in front just under the eyes, so as to cover the face. Their manner of removing from one place to another with their herds, differs from the Calmucs, in as much as they make use of a great many arbas, upon which wooden huts are placed transport women and children.

On the 15th of August, the camp was removed a few versts nearer to the Volga. We then proceeded with our journey, keeping on the left bank of the Aktubah, not only to visit the Calmucs who were stationed there, but also the Russian sect of Molokanians, (or milk-eaters,) amongst whom, I had the year before, some success in introducing the Scriptures. In the morning we passed a Cossack-station of that cordon which is designed to oppose the Kirguses, and which extends for a considerable distance along the Aktubah. Some versts from the camp, we noticed considerable heaps of broken bricks, which continued with some interruption for fifteen versts

to the Selitrenoi Gorodok, (or saltpetre town.) These are the remains of the ancient Tartar cities and villages on the left bank of the Aktubah. In 1562, these Tartars were enslaved by the Russians, and their possessions were laid waste from Kasan to Astracan.

An attempt was subsequently made to procure saltpetre from these ruins, and we found on our road an iron cauldron of great size, which had been employed for that purpose. At noon we arrived at Selitrenoi Gorodok, (which the Tartars call Tschigit) where we stayed till noon the following day. This ancient Tartarian city must, as it is evident from the remains, have been remarkable for its size and splendour; its ancient name I have not been able to learn. It was situated on the left shore of the Aktubah, which is here of such breadth and depth, that it can be navigated by the largest of the Volga ships, and it is connected by one of its arms with the Volga. The ruins of the city extend far and wide along the shore of the river. Little, however, of its former grandeur has escaped, and only a few forts rise from the confused mass of ruins. These towers appeared to me to be not

of the Tartarian, but the early Russian architecture, and they may have served to protect Russian settlers from the Volga and Aktubah bandits. In the first place, they are built with clay cement, whereas the Tartars used a durable mortar; in the next place, they are evidently piled up from the ruins of handsome buildings, as may be seen by the glazed tiles which are stuck on at random, without any respect to the glazed side. In one of these towers I saw a large iron cannon of the calibre of a twelve-pounder, and I was told by an artillery officer, that this was a relict of Peter the Great. We perceived, from the ruins of this city, that here as well as at Seray, (the capital of the Kamschatchan empire, higher up on the same river) walls were built of glazed brick and pointed, and mosaic work of various colours was employed in decoration here, as throughout the ancient Turkish, Tartar, and Saracen tribes, in the East, in Egypt, and Spain. The ground is usually deep blue, with other colours let in. A large specimen of this mosaic work, upwards of six feet long and one deep, with a large white inscription in

the Tartarian language, and all sorts of flowers, upon a blue ground, we found in the wall of a peasant's cottage, and we perceived that the figures are not printed upon the fabric, but let into the substance, much in the same way as a cabinet-maker inlays his furniture. I here procured several antiques; amongst others, an alabaster with an inscription, a copper amulet with magical characters, a seal with a name upon it; a number of ring-jewels, and jewels with inscriptions, (particularly a Makha stone, or Alik Temani, with the Mohamedan apophthegm "There is no God but God!") also a quantity of silver and copper coins of the old Chans, from 1310 A.D. (or 710 of the Hegira) to 1364 (or 766.)—from Tochtocho-Chan to Asis Chan, who is little known in history.

According to Guldenstadt, the ancient name of this city was Dsched-Hadschi.

Government at present keeps a strong detachment of Cossacks in this place; there is also a cannon with its appurtenances. The cordon-station is slightly fortified, and provided with a few old iron cannon on the bastions, which are

all supported on wooden props instead of carriages, and show by their condition that the neighbourhood has enjoyed a golden peace.

On the 16th of August, our road led us through meadows which are overflowed by the Volga, and which the Russians call Saima-land: in the latter part of the day we were again on the steppes. After this, we came to a small salt-lake, which may be smelt from a considerable distance. The shores of this lake were overgrown in some parts with sedges, but everywhere covered with thick clay, which looked as if crusted with ice. This was very fine salt, which, after the evaporation of the water, (which is of a scarlet hue) crystallizes in geometrical forms, and remains on the surface. We used some of it with our food, and found it well-tasted and clean. We slept that night at Charawali, on the flat roof of a peasant's shed, and on the 17th, at nine in the morning, we proceeded with our journey. In the forenoon we saw a herd of antelopes, and a bustard. At noon, we reached the village of Saskull, (which in the Tartar language, is a stinking ditch:) it is principally inhabited by Tschuwasches, whom the Government has banished from Kasan. Their

manners and customs were Russian, but their language is peculiar to themselves. In the evening, we arrived at a strong cordon-post, garrisoned by Cossacks and Calmucs. Five-and-forty of the latter were encamped in Russian tents, and we took up our quarters near them. We were here visited by a Calmuc, who inquired after Sodnom, and would fain have gone back with us. He had attempted, the year before, to come to Sarepta, and join the band of believing Calmucs, but as he could not obtain a pass, he was sent back from the cordon. His Prince, Dschimbe-Scharrab, who resided in this neighbourhood, and had become acquainted with Brother Schill at the time when the Calmucs withdrew from the hordes, and showed himself at that time well-disposed to the Word of God, was also inclined to march to Sarepta, and to take with him such of his subjects as might desire to accompany him. As things afterwards turned out so unluckily with regard to our Calmuc settlers, we never heard any thing more of him. More than a hundred families of the Torgud Erdeni's horde were encamped in this part of the Saima-land; and this was the last Calmuc camp that we saw on our journey.

CHAPTER XIV.

On the 18th of August, about noon, we reached the Russian village Nicolajewsk, from which we meant to cross to Mount Bogdo, and thence, through the Molokan villages, to Sarepta. This scheme, however, was prevented from being carried into execution, by a very distressing circumstance. I went to a peasant's hut with André to buy some fowls, and while we were there, we accidentally mentioned that we were going home to Sarepta: immediately a venerable-looking old man, with white hair, sprung up from his couch (on which he was taking his siestre), and exclaimed with horror, "I pity you if you belong to Sarepta, for it has been burnt down within these few days!"

At first we gave no credit to his story, and took it for a mere idle report, such as we had often heard on our journey; but when he directed us to eye-witnesses in the village, who confirmed what he had said, and mentioned particulars, we could unhappily no longer doubt the truth of the assertion. We were unable to ascertain the amount of the damage, because the witnesses, from not knowing the place well, could not give us such an account as we wanted; and this greatly increased our distress. Stunned and bowed down under the hand of the Lord (whose ways are past finding out), we had now only one thought, to return immediately to our beloved and afflicted Sarepta, there to share the misfortunes which had come upon us, with the brethren who were now dearer to us than ever. We therefore directed our steps through the Saima-land, to the ferry on the Volga, that we might take the shortest way home, on the right bank of the river. When we had forded the Aktubah, in a shallow part, we had to cross or to go round countless pools and streams, with which the Saima-land is intersected; and on one occasion our coach stuck fast in a bog: fortunately there were some fishermen at hand, who helped us

out for a small reward. We reached the Volga by dark, and there we found a Russian priest, and another ecclesiastic, with a crowd of people and carriages, who had been waiting for a long time to cross the ferry. That we might be sure of getting over in good time in the morning, we gave a salute from all our fire-arms. I had observed, that this had a salutary effect upon the boatmen at the other ferries, because it gave them the idea that we were Government officers, or people of importance, whom they could not safely detain. As it was still possible that the boat might arrive in the night, we durst not separate from the rest of the party, and we were forced to endure mud and gnats on the shore of the Volga.

Before sun-rise the next morning (August the 19th), the boat made its appearance, and carried us swiftly with the other gentry, to the village of Nikolajewsk, on the opposite side. Some avaricious fishermen's wives demanded an unconscionable fare from all the passengers, and surcharged *us* beyond measure. The priest supported us warmly, and appealed to a Government rate, by which we at last came off pretty fairly; but the women vented their spleen, for a long time, behind the priest's back,

complaining that he bated their fares, but that he took money himself from living and dead. Here, and at the other places we came to, we heard a great deal of the fire at Sarepta, but no two stories agreed. We arrived at Tschornoija this day.

On the 20th of August, we got through sixty-five versts with our weary beasts, and arrived at Salnikowskaja; and the next day we ended our long journey by the last fifty versts to Sarepta.

With beating hearts we drew near to the spot, which twelve days before had been flourishing so prosperously, and two thirds of which now lay in ashes and smoking ruins. The high chimneys still remained as monuments of the conflagration; they had been made fire-proof, and they now bore testimony to the former extent of the building. As we also had lost our home, by the destruction of the Establishment, we found lodging and a temporary settlement in a house which had been allotted to the unmarried brethren.

So ended our journey, which lasted from the 26th of May to the 21st of August. We had travelled about one thousand three hundred versts, or eight hundred and sixty-seven miles. Our gracious God and Saviour had delivered us from

many a danger, and helped us out of many and great difficulties, for which we offered up heart-felt praise and thanks, after our safe return from this laborious journey over the steppes.

THE END.

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